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PREFACE.

"*Con O'Regan*" is not new to the Irish Catholics, at least, of the New World. It appeared first in the *American Celt*, a weekly paper, conducted by my friend, Hon. T. D. McGee, in this city, and was recently re-published in the columns of the *New York Tablet*. The "plain unvarnished tale" which "blots the leaves" of this volume was meant to point a moral that is well worthy the attention of Irish emigrants to these western shores of the Atlantic. It was written in connection with a movement which it is pleasant even to remember—the Buffalo Convention, one of the best-conceived plans ever brought before the American-Irish for the permanent advantage of their newly-arrived compatriots: a plan which, if it had been generally adopted and carried out, might have been of incalculable benefit to many thousands of the Irish race, by removing them from the overcrowded cities of our Atlantic seaboard to the safer, calmer, and more healthful pursuits of agricultural life, whether on the smiling prairies of the West, or by the great waters of the North. But although the Buffalo Convention, for want of public encouragement, failed in doing what it was meant to do for Irish emigrants, a day may come when its wise provisions

will be eagerly adopted to meet the wants of the multitudes who are hurrying all too fast from the Old Land which we all love, but which many of us, alas! shall see never more. Should that day come, it will be well for the old race in America, but should it not come, and should posterity forever ignore the noble effort that was once made to turn the tide of emigration into a safe and saving channel, I desire here to place on record, once for all, the high-souled generosity, the noble disinterestedness, and the entire devotedness of the hundred gentlemen, some of them ecclesiastics, venerable in years and in high repute for wisdom and virtue, all of them more or less distinguished, who met, some eight years ago, in the border city of Buffalo, on the confines of British America, to deliberate on the best means of promoting the permanent interests of Irish emigrants to the New World. If the Convention did not do all the good they hoped and expected from it, the fault, assuredly, was not theirs.

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CON O'REGAN;

OR,

EMIGRANT LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

ONE cold, bleak morning, in the fall of 1844, a young woman timidly approached the fateful half-door in the Post Office of a New England city.

"Have you e'er a letter, if you please, sir, for Winny O'Regan?"

"No, my good girl, nothing for you to-day." And the dry, official response of the Post Office clerk was unconsciously changed to a softer tone, for the speaker was an Irish Protestant, and he did feel, at times, more sympathy than people would imagine, for the quiet, civil-spoken emigrants who daily and hourly addressed him in home-accent, anxiously seeking news from his own land. Besides, he had noticed this same Winny O'Regan almost every day for the last fortnight, asking, but in vain, the same

question, and his brief negative was every day chronicled in deeper sadness on her pale, care-worn features. There was something touching, too, in Winny's appearance when one came to examine her closely. She was a tall, thin girl, of some three or four-and-twenty years, with a soft dark eye and a pensive cast of countenance. Sorrow had evidently chilled the warm glow of youth in Winny's temperament, and chastened her down to the sedate gravity of more mature years. Her dark hair was smoothly and carefully arranged on either side of her high, pale brow, taking something from its breadth, which would otherwise have been remarkable. Her hands were small and well-formed, though much discolored and intersected in every direction by those unseemly *hacks* in the skin which denote labor of the hardest kind. It was late in the fall, and yet Winny was scantily clothed, and looked, on the whole, rather woe-begone. All this the clerk had noticed, and somehow, with all her apparent poverty, it struck him that the girl had seen better days. She seemed so anxious, moreover, about the letter from Ireland, that it went to the young man's heart, for he, too, was, at times, eagerly expectant of "news from home," where he had left an aged mother and two young sisters close by "pastoral Bann," in the verdant holmes of Down. But he had no time to question Winny, for scores of others were demanding his attention in the quick, authoritative style peculiar to bustling, self-important Yankees. So Mal-

colmson was fain to put the sad-looking Irish girl out of his head, and with her the white cottage on the sweet Ban-side which the sight of her wistful face had somehow conjured up.

As for Winny O'Regan, she turned away with a sickening sense of despondency, and a tear found its way unbidden to her eye, as, gathering her woollen shawl around her, she retraced her steps towards her present dwelling—*home* it was not. All at once she was reminded by the basket on her arm that she had to go to market. Having turned down a side-street which was her nearest way to the market, she was hurrying on with a rapid pace, intending to make up for the few minutes she had lost, but was suddenly brought to a dead pause by the apparition of a young man in a gray frieze coat and corduroy breeches, who, starting out of a shop-door, accosted her with—

"Winny! Winny O'Regan! is this yourself? Can't you take time to speak to a body?"

Dropping the basket from her arm, Winny took hold of the stranger with both hands, and looked into his frank, love-breathing face, with eyes full of joyful tears, her color changing and her lip quivering. As soon as she could speak, she exclaimed in smothered accents—

"The Lord be praised, Con dear! Is it yourself that's in it? I was beginnin' to be afeard that something had happened you. Oh! sure, sure, but I'm glad to see you! An' how did you leave all at

home? How are Biddy and the children, an'—an'—” her voice trembled, “an' my poor mother? Con, darlin'! how are they all? and did you get my last letter?”

“If I didn't how would I be here, you foolish girl?” said Con, trying hard to keep in his tears, although half forgetting where he was in his joy at finding Winny. “An' sure they're all well an' hearty at home, barrin'—” he stopped, looked hard at Winny, and then bit his lip, as though determined at all hazards to keep in what was just coming out.

“Barrin' who, Con?” inquired his sister, anxiously.

“Oh! Mary Malone—my uncle John's Mary. She died last May was a year, of decline.”

“The Lord be good to her soul!” said Winny, with deep feeling, “an' so she's gone at last. Poor Mary! well, thank God, it's no one else, for somehow it was my mother I was thinkin' of. How does she look, Con? Is age beginnin' to show on her?”

“Well, no!” said Con, with a sort of hesitation that Winny could not well account for; “the last time I saw her, Winny, she looked as young, ay! an' younger than she did the day you left home.” That was true enough, for the widowed mother was then laid out in her brown habit, a fair and “comely corpse,” as the neighbors all declared. The sorrows of long years had vanished at the moment of death, and a smile of ineffable joy rested on the thin, pale

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lips, announcing that the weary had at length found rest. But it would never do to tell Winny all at once that the mother she so loved was cold in the clay. At least so Con thought, and Con was right, for such tidings would have broken Winny's faithful heart, had they come upon her without due preparation.

"But where do you live, Winny dear?" said Con, "I forgot the name of the street that you mentioned in your letter, an' I just went into this shop here abroad to look over the letter again, when, as good luck would have it, I was standin' near the door, an' seen you passin' by."

"I'm sorry I haven't a place of my own to take you to, Con," said Winny, sadly, "but if you'll just step down with me to the market (for I'm in a great hurry), I'll leave you at Paul Bergen's on my way back. You remember Paul, don't you?"

"Is it Paul Bergen?" cried Con, with sudden animation; "why, then, to be sure I do, Winny, an' right glad I'll be to see him. How is he doin' out here?"

"Only middling, Con, only just middling," said Winny, as they walked quickly along side by side. "He might be better than he is, if he wasn't so fond of the drop. He has a long family, an' his wife's health is none of the best. She's wearin' away fast, poor woman!"

There was a short silence, during which Con's meditations seemed rather of a sombre character.

At last he said, as if pursuing the same train of thought, "An' yourself, Winny dear?—how do *you* make out?" The words were not much in themselves, but the glance that accompanied them touched Winny's heart, for it said as plain as could be: "You are not so well off as I expected to find you."

Winny's eyes filled with tears, but she tried to answer cheerfully: "How could I send so much money home if I wasn't doin' well? You mustn't mind my clothes, Con, for you know I'm about my business now. Wait till Sunday, and you'll see how fine I'll be."

But Con's eyes were fixed on her gloveless hands, and his cheek reddened as he said: "I see its not at the dressmaking you are, after all; your poor hands are redder and coarser than they used to be; an' your face, too, is paler and thinner—oh, Winny, Winny! I'm afeard you earned that money you sent us harder than we thought." There was a guttural sound in his voice, as if something choked his utterance, and the light faded from his full blue eye. He was moved even to tears, but he dared not weep where so many cold, strange eyes were upon him. Winny saw her brother's emotion, and somehow it was very soothing to her heart, so long unused to home sympathies.

"No matter how it was earned," said she briskly, "it just went the road it ought to go. What do I want with money only to make you all comfortable?"

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I wasn't long here till I found that I could earn more at housework, as they call it, than I could at sewing, so it was all one to me, you know."

They had by this time reached the market, and Con was so lost in wonder at the novelty of the sight, that all other thoughts were suspended for the time being. He used to think the shambles in his market-town at home presented a magnificent display of meat, but what was it to this? Surely there could never be people found to buy half that meat. Winny laughed, and said he would soon change his mind when he had lived a few years, or even months, in a city like that.

Winny having made the necessary purchases, made the best of her way home, stopping at Paul Bergen's, to introduce her brother. Paul had latterly taken up his abode in a cellar some eight or ten feet under ground. The damp was oozing out through the floor, and the place had a cold, cheerless look, for although there was a stove right in the middle of the floor, opposite the bedroom door, it seemed to send forth but little heat. Round it were gathered three young children, crouching on the boards, while in front sat a pale, sickly-looking woman, wrapped in a faded plaid shawl, nursing an infant as pale and ghastly as herself. The cold seemed to have seized on the poor mother's heart, for ever and anon she trembled like an aspen, and leaned forward towards where warmth ought to be, but, unhappily, was not. Alas! for poor Nora Bergen—pale and

cold, and poverty-stricken as she sat there, she had been once the envy of many a maiden, and the pride of many a loving heart. Nora Bergen had been for years the rustic belle of "a country side," and though it was hard to recognize any trace of beauty in the squalid misery of her present appearance, there were still certain lineaments that marked her identity, otherwise doubtful.

Con could hardly believe his eyes that the figure before him was an old acquaintance; but conviction forced itself upon him, however reluctantly, when he heard Winny say:

"Good morning, Mrs. Bergen; how do you feel to-day, ma'am?"

"Why, not much better, Winny; I have the chills very bad on me the day, an' we have hardly a spark of fire, you see, for Paul was to send home some coal to us before goin' to his work, an' I think he must have forgot all about it. But who is this you have with you?"

"Ah, then, don't you know him, Mrs. Bergen, dear?—sure isn't it our Con, all the way from Ballymullen; why I thought you'd know him if you met him in Africa, let alone here."

"Why, the Lord bless me, Con O'Regan, is it you that's in it? Come over here an' give me your hand, for I'm not able to stand up off o' my seat. Sure enough, I heard you were comin' out, but somehow I was in hopes you wouldn't. Ah, then, Con, I wish you had stayed at home. I'm glad to

see you, an' I'm sorry to see you. But, my goodness, Winny, isn't it all like a drame?—oh! oh! but it's the weary, weary world. But won't you sit down, Winny?—run, children, an' get a couple of chairs!"

Thus she ran on, endeavoring to hide her confusion under a show of cheerful animation that made it still more conspicuous. Winny had barely time to commend her brother to Mrs. Bergen's hospitality for the present, and then hurried away, leaving that poor woman much distressed in mind on account of her inability to entertain Con O'Regan as her kind heart would wish. Calling to her a little boy of some six or seven years, the eldest of those who were lounging round the stove, she whispered to him to try if there wasn't e'er a bit of coal or anything to make a fire. Off went the little bright-faced fellow diving into a sort of hole in the wall, and, after some search, he was so fortunate as to find a little coal, which he proceeded to put in the stove, his mother's face assuming a more cheerful expression as she saw it beginning to burn.

"Now, Patsey, my son, since you have done so well, will you just put some water in the kettle and set it on the fire till we make a cup of tea for Con O'Regan?"

Con protested that he had no need of anything, but he might as well have kept silent, for Mrs. Bergen was only sorry she had nothing better to

offer him, but sure a warm cup of tea would do him no harm that cold raw morning.

"I wonder what's keeping Jane, children," said the mother; "I told her not to stay on any account." Just as she spoke, the door opened, and down the steps came a little girl about twelve years old, with a pretty, intelligent-looking face, but poorly and meanly clad.

"Well, Jane, did you see your father?" was the first question.

"I did, mother, but he wouldn't go; he said we had coal enough till the evening." And then she whispered something to her mother, who blushed deeply, and said, "Husht! husht!"

The little girl was then introduced as Mrs. Bergen's eldest daughter, and having taken a bashful, stealthy look at the stranger from Ireland, she set about getting the tea, which she did in a neat, tidy way, that showed her well accustomed to such little offices. Whilst the simple repast was in preparation, Mrs. Bergen kept asking a thousand questions about places and persons long unseen, but never to be forgotten. Memory was busy with the poor heart-broken woman, and the present was all but forgotten in the bright reminiscences of the past, Con all the time observing her with painful interest. Presently there came a loud knock to the door, and Mrs. Bergen's faint "come in," was followed by the appearance of a tall young man, in a round jacket and a low-crowned tarpaulin hat, such as sailors are wont

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to wear. His face was flushed with an unnatural glow, and there was a swaggering, blustering air about him which was anything but prepossessing.

Mrs. Bergen seemed in no haste to greet the newcomer, but the children all gathered around him as he coolly took possession of a chair with the air of one who is determined to make himself at home. The presence of our friend Con was quickly noticed by this personage, who, after leisurely surveying the stranger, squirted a mouthful of tobacco-spittle over the floor, and turning to Mrs. Bergen who had only noticed his entrance by a silent nod, asked who the greenhorn might be.

"Why, that's Con O'Regan from our place at home. I thought you knew him, Tom, but sure it's hard for you to remember anything now."

"Con O'Regan, from Ballymullen!" repeated the young man; "the deuce it is! Give me your hand, Con, and let me have a proper look at you. Why, sure enough, you do look something like a little fellow of that name that used to go to school to old Vinegar-face."

"You mean Master O'Connor, I suppose," said Con, with a heightened color.

"To be sure I do, the old rascal! who else should I mean? And so you're little Con O'Regan—that was," he added, as he took in at a glance the sinewy though slender proportions of the other. "By jingo! I'm confounded glad to see you. And what news from the old sod?"

"Nothing worth speaking of," said Con, very coolly, for he was by no means taken with his new companion; "may I make so free as to ask who *you* are, now that you know who *I* am?"

"All right, old fellow. It seems you don't keep spite, or you'd remember Tom Derragh?"

The glow deepened on Con's face, for he had been gradually calling forth from the storehouse of memory certain disagreeable reminiscences of his schooldays, in which this same Tom Derragh had borne a prominent part. He had been the bully of the school, and poor Con being much younger than he, had often suffered from his arbitrary and oppressive sway. Yet in those early days Tom had not been without some good traits, and with all his faults he had many friends. Observing Con's change of countenance, Tom burst into a loud laugh, and slapping him on the shoulder, bade him forget and forgive.

"Don't you know what old Father Halligan used to say; eh, Con?" another slap on the shoulder. "Is the old fellow living or dead—which? He was a great hand at talking, and used to come it over us slick. By George, I used to think him a great man all out! Ha! ha! ha! weren't we green in those days, Con?"

"If respect for Father Halligan, or any other priest, made us green, as you call it, I'm just as green still," said Con O'Regan, "and I tell you plainly, Tom Derragh, that I won't sit by and hear you, or any

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"There now," said Tom, turning to Mrs. Bergen, with another of his coarse laughs, "they're all so touchy about religion when they come out first. There's my hand on it, Con, I didn't mean any harm. I was just like you in that respect when I came here, but I soon got over my pettishness, and so will you, by japers!"

"With the help of God, I never will," replied Con, firmly; "I hope I'll never see the day when I'll forget the respect due the clergy."

"Well! well! never mind," cried Tom; "let's see if we can't make it up." Then thrusting his hand into his breeches pocket, he drew out the solitary coin which still remained after his last night's revel, and calling to him little Patsey Bergen, he told him to fetch a half-pint of brandy or gin—he didn't care which.

"If it's for me you mean the treat, Tom," observed Con, as, arresting the boy in his progress towards the door, and taking the money from him, he gave it back to Tom, "you may spare yourself the trouble of sendin' out. I thank you all the same, but I'm a cestotaller."

"The deuce you are," cried Tom, with real vexation; "and so you'll not take anything?"

"Nothing of that kind, Tom. Mrs. Bergen is gettin' some tea made, an' I'll take a cup of it, with all the pleasure in life." Mrs. Bergen could not do

less than ask Tom to have a cup of the tea which Jane just then placed on a small table near her mother. But Tom said he wouldn't give a fig for all the tea in America, and pulling out his pipe, prepared for a smoke, while Con partook of Mrs. Bergen's humble fare, which she offered with many apologies for not having better.

Meanwhile, Tom sat leaning back in his chair, with his long legs stretched to the utmost, and his stolid eyes fixed on vacancy, as he puffed out volume after volume of dense smoke, which gradually enveloped him as in a cloud. Ever and anon he would put some question to Con, relating to sundry individuals whom he had known "in the old country," his voice issuing ever from the midst of the cloud, in a way that made Con smile. At last, Con tired of being catechized, and thought it was time to turn the tables; so setting down his cup and saucer with a preliminary "hem!" he began to examine the evidence.

"You have fine easy times of it here, Tom. You seem to be a sort of a walkin' gentleman. I suppose you have your fortune made long ago. They say fortunes are not hard to make here."

This leading observation elicited a scoffing laugh from out the cloud, and a heavy sigh from the pale hostess, who was endeavoring to hush her infant to repose with a mournful croon.

"I hope you'll find it easier to make a fortune than most folks do," said Tom, still laughing. "As for me, you know I always scorned to tell a lie, and

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"I'll not begin now, for you'd soon find out the truth; I ha'n't got one shilling between me and death but that same two shilling piece that you sent back to keep the old boy out of my pocket."

"And how do you manage to live at all?" inquired Con, in downright amazement. "Why, I thought you must be well off by this time."

"Ho! ho! how do I manage! why I help to unload ships and such like jobs, down at the wharf. I earn plenty of money, old fellow; but it goes as fast as I make it. There are a jolly set of fellows, all free-and-easy like myself, and we stand to each other like bricks. As we make we spend, and we hardly ever know the want of a shilling, for when one's locker is empty, another's is full, and the rich pay the reckoning for the poor till luck turns again. That's the way we live, and if you have nothing better in view, you may come and take a hand with us; there's no scarcity of work."

"Many thanks to you," said Con, very composedly, "but that sort of life wouldn't answer me at all. I have a wife and two little ones at home in Ireland, and I'll have to keep every penny I can make together till I send for them. I'm in hopes that Winny will be able to find out some employment for me."

"God mark you with grace, Con," said Mrs. Bergen, suddenly raising her head; "while you keep to them notions you'll be sure to do well. Och! och! if Paul Bergen had only shunned bad company, and

kept his earnings together, it's not as we are we'd be now, for he made a power o' money, Con, one way an' another since he came here. But God's will be done! I suppose this was all before me, or I wouldn't have it to go through."

Before any one could reply, the door again opened and Paul Bergen made his appearance. He was a stout, coarse-featured, broad-shouldered man, with a regular "brandy-face," and a thick head of light-colored hair, approaching to red. Yet Paul had been once a good-looking, rollicking fellow, a favorite with all the girls, because of his off-handed bearing, backed by never-failing good humor. Con remembered him well before he left Ireland, and a deep sigh escaped from him as he looked on the sottish, ungainly figure that hard living had made him.

Paul's first salutation was to Tom Derragh, of whom he affectionately inquired "Where the mischief he had got such a face?"

"I guess I got it where you got yours, my hearty," returned the rough 'longshoreman, with his usual horse-laugh. "What happened you that you weren't at the raffle at Pat Finnerty's last night?"

"I couldn't be in two places at once, could I?" was the quick rejoinder. "There was a dance at Bill Dempsey's, here abroad, and Bill would never forgive me if I didn't go. But, I say, Nora," to his wife, "who have we here?"—turning his eye for the first time on our friend Con, who began by this time to wish himself safe back in Ballymullen.

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"It's a'most time for you to ask, Paul," said Nora, reproachfully. She then proceeded to introduce Con, and to do Paul justice, he was right glad to see him.

"You're heartily welcome here, Con," said Paul, taking a seat near him, and slipping some money to one of the children, which was, however, noticed by Nora, who called out with more animation than usual:

"Never mind the drink, Paul, for Con O'Regan wouldn't touch a drop of it; send for some meat, though, till we get the dinner. It won't take long to cook."

The money was given as freely as though Paul had a pocketful of that valuable commodity, and then he asked where was Peter? Now Peter was the eldest son of the family, being next to Jane, and his father was not a little proud of Peter's good looks, which he inherited from his mother. The boy was clever, too, and could take up "the learning," whether right or wrong, as fast as any boy of his age.

"Did Con O'Regan see Peter yet?" demanded the father.

"No, indeed, then, Paul, he did not. I haven't seen a sight of Peter myself since he got his breakfast with you this morning. He's on the streets, as usual, God look to him and them that has the rearin' of him! Oh Con, dear, it's an awful place this to bring up children in—it is, indeed!"

"Hold your foolish tongue, woman," said her husband, angrily, "and put that squalling brat to sleep. Stir yourselves and get us some dinner, and don't be botherin' us with your groans and your moans. Have you seen Winny since you came, Con?"

Con answered in the affirmative, whereupon Tom grinned a dubious smile. "Winny's one of the saints, I'm thinking, Con. She's as modest as a nun, and wouldn't look a fellow in the face on any account. They say she's gathering money fast; is it true, Con?"

The subject was by no means pleasing to Con, who gave an evasive answer, and then put some question to Paul relating to some other acquaintances of theirs who had emigrated during the previous year. Paul gave a history of each person, as far as he knew, with occasional episodes from Tom, which were in general anything but satisfactory. By this time Jane had some ham and eggs on the table, with some bread and potatoes, and Paul would not consent to eat a morsel, unless both Tom and Con would "sit over and have share of what was going on." In vain did Con declare that he had just been eating and drinking—Paul cut him short with:

"Don't be botherin' us now with your excuses. I suppose you think the victuals are so stinted that you'll leave somebody short. But you needn't fear," he added bitterly; "there's more in it than we'll all eat. To be sure things are not so plentiful here as

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we all remember them in the farmers' houses about Ballymullen; we haven't the big fat pots of bacon and cabbage,—or broth that a spoon would stand in; no, nor the fine baskets of laughing potatoes that would do a man's heart good to look at them; but what there is, you're welcome to, and so, if you don't want to insult me, you'll just sit over at onst an' fall to."

So Con was obliged to give in, for fear of hurting the sensitive feelings of poor Paul, whose sense of hospitality was just as strong as though he lived in a palace, and had sumptuous fare to offer. Poor Paul Bergen! had he never left the shelter of his father's humble cabin, or, leaving it, had he fallen into a more genial track west of the Atlantic, he might have lived a happier and more useful life in the exercise of those old home-virtues which make the peasant's cot in Ireland a palace of content.

Nora could not be prevailed upon to taste a morsel (fearful, perhaps, of leaving the strangers short); she had taken a cup of tea, she said, and that was dinner enough for her.

After dinner, Paul hurried off to his work, charging Con not to stir from where he was till he should come back, and promising Nora to send the coal immediately, which he punctually did. Tom went out with him, to Nora's evident displeasure, but she did not dare to make any objection.

CHAPTER II.

THE long hours of the afternoon passed heavily away, Con fearing to lose his way if he ventured out, although Mrs. Bergen offered to send Patsey with him, "and I'll go bail you'll not go astray while you'll have him with you," said the fond mother, "for though he's not six years old till next Christmas, there's hardly a corner round here but what he knows. Indeed, they all know the corners too well," she added, mournfully, "for they're on the street most o' their time. Only the weather is against them to-day, we wouldn't have so many o' them in the house. I do what I can to keep them in, but they go in spite o' me when they take the notion."

"It's too bad," observed Con, "too bad, altogether. Why, if them chaps were in Ireland, their fathers or mothers would break every bone in their body sooner than let them run on the streets."

"Ha! ha!" cried Patsey from his station behind the stove, "then I'm real glad I wasn't born in Ireland. Boys a'nt treated so here. There a'nt any whipping allowed here, you know, and I often heard boys say that if Irish Paddies had their way they'd give their children awful us'age. There now, Jim,"

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to his little brother, "do you hear that? If we were in Ireland, they'd break our bones if we didn't do just as they'd want us to."

"Hold your tongue, Patsey," said his mother, "you mustn't talk so; you don't know what you're saying."

"Yes, but I do, though," returned the precocious juvenile; "I've got ears, hain't I? and I heard what the man said. I wish any body would try to break my bones, I do!" and he assumed such a threatening attitude that Con could not help laughing heartily, notwithstanding his unqualified disgust.

"Well, after that, Mrs. Bergen," said he, while the mother made sundry attempts to coerce the boy into silent subjection, "after that, ma'am, I'll wonder at nothing. If I saw the big Church or Meetin'-house there abroad left sittin' on its head in the middle of the street, it wouldn't give me the least surprise after that. Now, just answer me one question, Mrs. Bergen!—is there anything wrong with that child's head?"

"Not that I know of."

"And is that the way that children talk up to their parents here?"

"Well, sometimes," said Mrs. Bergen, blushing as she spoke. "There's little respect here for parents; that's a fact, Con, and I declare to you there are times when I'd give the world to be dead and buried, out of the hearin' and seein' of my own and other people's children. Och! och! if we were only a

thousand miles away from this unlucky place, in some town or country where we could bring up our children in the fear and love of God, as children are brought up in poor old Ireland, and where Paul would be away from the bad company and the cursed taverns, I think I could die with a joyful heart. But no, no, no"—and at every word her voice sank lower and lower till it reached a hoarse whisper—"no, no, we're bound hand and foot; we haven't the means now to go anywhere, and God look down on us this sorrowful day!"

Con hardly knew what to say, and yet he wished to administer consolation to that breaking heart. But stranger as he was, and utterly ignorant of Paul Bergen's affairs, how could he pretend to hold out hopes? Whilst these thoughts were passing through his mind, a light tap came to the door, and the next moment a soft arm was round his neck, and the gentle voice of Winny spoke at his side.

"Don't be frightened, Con, it's only me. I'm here far sooner than I expected, for when the master come to his dinner, I told him about you, and he said he just wanted a stout, active man, for a porter at the present time, and that he would give you a trial. So you see God is good to us—as he always is," she added, feelingly. "Come, Con, take your hat and we'll go right off to the store."

"The store, Winny, what is that?"

"Oh! I forgot," said Winny, with a smile, "that they were all *shops* at home. But there's no such

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thing as shops here, Con, except where men work at their trades; it's *stores* they call the shops. And how have you been since I saw you, Mrs. Bergen?” added Winny, as she slipped half a dollar into little Jim's hand; “I had hardly time to say a word this morning when I was here. How is the pain in the side?”

“Very little better, Winny, many thanks to you for the asking. You don't come to see us very often, though,—but, indeed, it's hard to expect a decent, quiet girl like you to go where you'll meet such indifferent company as Paul brings here. So I don't blame you, Winny dear, for I know your heart is good, and I'd be sorry to see you put yourself in harm's way on my account. And your brother's a credit to you, Winny, long may he be so!”

Winny hastily shook hands with Mrs. Bergen, and left the house in silence, fearful to let her see how deeply she felt for her situation. Con and she walked on for some time without a word on either side, till at length Winny started, as if awaking from a trance, and asked her brother with a smile how he liked America, as far as he had seen it?

“To tell you the truth, Winny, dear, I don't like it at all. If that's the way men live here, the sooner I'm home again in Ballymullen, it'll be all the better for me. Paul Bergen and Tom Derragh have given me enough of America!”

“Hut, tut, Con! don't be foolish,” said Winny, laughing; “you'll see plenty of our own country

people here living as well as heart could wish. Paul Bergen and Tom Derragh are bad specimens, sure enough, but don't let them frighten you out of your senses."

"But what evil spirit gets into them," persisted Con, "that they can't keep from tippling, an' them left home to make the better of it in a strange country? Just look at that decent woman of Paul Bergen's, sittin' there perishin' with cold half of her time, and lookin' the picture of starvation, an' himself with a face as red as a turkey's head. And such a fine family as they have of clean, likely children—but sure they're a-rearing up for the devil—God forgive me for sayin' so! And then, Tom Derragh—to see a fine able young man like him without a shilling hardly to jingle on a tombstone, after being ten years in America!"

"Well, well, Con, never mind," said his sister, coaxingly, "you and I will have a different story to tell a few years hence, with the help of God! I've a thousand questions to ask you, but we haven't time now, for here's Mr. Coulter's store. Now mind your *p's* and *q's*, Con,—the master is a very good sort of a man, if he finds people to his liking. He'll be at you at first about your religion, but never mind him, his bark is worse than his bite. Just keep your temper, and let him talk away, after a while he'll get tired of it, when he sees he can make nothing of you, and he'll think all the more of you in the end for being steadfast in your own re-

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ligion. He's a real, good-hearted man at bottom, though he does seem a little rough at times. Come in now, in God's name, and hold up your head like a man. Don't be down-hearted, Con dear, for there's no fear but you'll do well."

"God send it, Winny!" said her brother, in a low voice, as Winny stopped him at the door to arrange the collar of his coat and brush the back of it down with her hand. Having glanced rapidly over his costume to see that all was right, she nodded approvingly, and in they went.

Mr. Coulter was behind his desk in the office attached to his wholesale warehouse, but on Winny's entrance with her brother, he came forward, with his hands in his pockets, and a pair of gold-mounted spectacles thrown up on his forehead.

"So this is your brother, Winny?" said the old gentleman, fixing a keen and practised eye on our friend Con.

"Yes, sir, this is my brother, and if you can find anything for him to do, both him and I will be very thankful. Being a stranger here, he might be some time before he'd get a situation, and that wouldn't answer him at all."

"Hump! his funds are rather low, I presume!" Mr. Coulter never *guessed*. He had been educated in England, and had a great contempt for all vernacular corruptions of his mother tongue. Another look at Con, who stood with his hat in his hand waiting for any direct address to himself.

"You're only just come out, young man!" said the merchant at length.

"Just landed yesterday, sir."

"You seem a fine hearty young fellow. What can you do?"

"Farming, sir, was what I was best used to, but I'm afeard there's little of that to be done here, so I'm willing to try my hand at anything else."

"So far good, and what about religion?"—this was said with a kind of smile that might be interpreted in various ways—"I suppose you're a Papist, are you?"

"I'm a Catholic, sir."

"I thought as much. Humph!" Here another pause, during which Mr. Coulter put his hands behind his back, and walked a few paces to and fro. Con ventured to break silence with:

"But sure, sir, that has nothing to do with my work. If you'll give me a trial I hope you'll not have reason to be dissatisfied, for I'll do my best, and we have a saying, sir, where I come from, that best can do no more."

"Yes, but I *do not* like to have Catholics in my employment,—you needn't smile, Winny, you know I speak the truth, although *you've* been in my family so many years—the fact is, young man, I have partners here who will hardly believe that Irishmen, and especially Irish Papists, can be trusted to any extent. Whether their views are correct is not the question, but these gentlemen keep me in hot water

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Now, although I am the head of the house, I like a

precious sight better to have things go on quietly

than to be continually exercising my authority in

the firm. I hate contentions, young man—what's

your name—O'Regan, of course?"

"Yes, sir, Con O'Regan," with a low bow.

"Well, Con, are you willing to run the risk of

pleasing my partners? for myself, although I am a

cross old fellow at times, I am willing to treat peo-

ple just as they deserve, without much regard to

their creed or country. But if you come here, I

warn you in time what you have to expect. If you

leave yourself open in any way to censure, I am sure

to be blamed for having taken it upon me to employ

an Irish Papist."

"Well, sir, I can only say, as I said before, that

I'll do my best, and if I don't give satisfaction to

the other gentlemen, you can send me off at a day's

warning, for, God knows, I wouldn't be the cause

of any dissension—no, not for a mint of money."

The old gentleman rubbed his hands briskly,

smiled and nodded to Winny, as much as to say:

"He'll pass muster, Winny—I know he will!" then

took his station once more behind the desk, and

told Con he might come to the store next morning,

if he chose.

"I will then, sir, and thank you kindly. I don't

want to lose one day, if God leaves me my health."

"Very well, Con, we'll begin with six dollars a week, and you'll make yourself generally useful at any branch of the business."

"Anything—anything you please, sir—God bless you, sir!"

"I say, Winny," said Mr. Coulter, calling after them to the door, "you'll just take your brother home and give him a comfortable supper. And, do you hear, Winny, see that he don't take up his lodging in any of those vile, low places, where he would be sure to meet with bad company. Take him to some quiet, decent boarding-house."

"I will, sir, thank you," said Winny, unable to say more in the fulness of her gratitude.

"Long life to your honor," cried Con, as they bowed themselves out; "may you never know the want of a friend—an' please God you never will! Why, Winny," said he, when they had reached the street, "that's a mighty fine old gentleman—not the least cross!"

"Oh, well, he seems to have taken a liking to you, Con, thanks be to God for that same, but, at any rate, he's very friendly and good-natured. The mistress is not quite so good as he is, but you'll have nothing to do with *her*. So much the better for you."

"But, Winny, what fine wages he's giving me!" said Con, pursuing the train of his own pleasant

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"Not so soon as you think, Con," said Winny, with a smile full of affection, "it will take you a good while to put as much together as will bring them all out. But, after all, with industry and good management, the time will soon come round. Hush, now, here's the house." They went in by the area door, which Winny opened with a latch-key. After lighting the fire and setting on the tea-kettle, she went up to tell her mistress that Mr. Coulter had sent her brother home with her to get his supper. While she was gone, Con sat looking around at the neat, comfortable kitchen with feelings of admiration not unmixed with simple curiosity, for there were many things there whose use was a mystery to him.

Mrs. Coulter was mightily pleased to hear of the safe arrival of Winny's brother, and graciously signified her intention to go down and see him forthwith. This was a piece of condescension which poor Winny could well have excused at that particular time, when her heart was full, and longed to pour itself out to that beloved brother so long unseen. But, of course, this was kept in the background, and Winny thanked her mistress. That lady was not slow in accomplishing her benevolent intention. Down she sailed to the lower regions, and appeared before the visual orbs of Con

O'Regan, slim, and tall, and stately, and looking as like mummy as living woman might.

Con rose and greeted the lady with his best bow, and then remained standing until Mrs. Coulter politely requested him to be seated, she herself taking her stand in front of the brightly-polished stove, through the grate of which a clear coal fire was seen sending up its flame to the bottom of the kettle aforesaid. Winny went to work at once to make some hot rolls for tea.

"And so you've engaged with Mr. Coulter, Con, (for such, I find, is your name)?"

"Yes, ma'am, I'm proud to say I have."

"Well, now, I hope you'll try and keep your situation. It is a very rare thing, indeed, for Irishmen to do well here, and on Winny's account, I should like you to do well. Winny is a good girl, although she is Irish. And now let me give you a piece of advice. My husband, Mr. Coulter, is a very good sort of man—in his own way—but you will sometimes find him rough and hot-tempered. Poor man! he means well, I believe, but he is not blessed with vital religion—that explains all, you see."

It did *not* explain it to Con's satisfaction, inasmuch as he had never heard of such a thing as vital religion, but he continued to listen attentively in hopes of some more tangible explanation of what the good lady was driving at.

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Mrs. Coulter, "seeing that 'a word to the wise is sufficient for them,' but, alas! I fear the language of Holy Writ is new to your ears, coming from poor benighted Ireland. However, you will endeavor not to arouse the old unsubdued Adam in my poor husband's nature by any thoughtless or unseemly conduct. And now that I am admonishing you as a friend, I would advise you to lay aside those shaggy garments of yours, and provide yourself with clothes more becoming a civilized land. Frieze and corduroy are unfortunately associated with Popery in the minds of Christian people, and as your outward man is, even so will you be judged. Winny, how soon will supper be ready?"

"In about half an hour, ma'am."

"Well, Con," said Mrs. Coulter, "we have no accommodation for you here, I regret to say."

"Oh, ma'am," said Winny, hastily interposing, "neither my brother nor I ever dreamed of his staying here. As soon as I wash up the tea-things I'll be asking leave to go and settle him in a boarding-house. Oh dear, no! ma'am, he don't want to be depending on any one, not even on me. He came out here to earn a living for himself and his family, and please God he'll be able to do it."

"Very good, indeed, Winny; you may go with him after tea, of course, but see that you return in seasonable time."

At this Winny was somewhat nettled. "I don't think, Mrs. Coulter, you ever knew me to spend an

evening out of your house since I came to it. I thank God I have as much regard for my character as any one else. Still I'm thankful to you for your good advice, whether I need it or not."

"Mrs. Coulter then sailed out of the kitchen and up stairs again, leaving the brother and sister at last to the free interchange of their feelings and affections.

"And now that we can speak a word between ourselves," said Winny, "how are you off for money, Con?—have you any at all left?"

"Well, not much; but still I'm not entirely run out. We had a good deal of expense, you see, with doctors an' one thing an' another, so that I had just enough to bury my mother decently, an' thankful I was for that same."

"What did you say?" cried Winny, dropping the dish-towel from her hand, and sinking on a seat pale as death. "Is my mother dead, then?"

Con was thunderstruck. He had quite forgotten that Winny was as yet ignorant of her mother's death, and he had alluded to it inadvertently. But it was too late to prevaricate now. The mournful tidings must come out, and he addressed himself to the task with desperate resolution.

"She is, Winny dear, may the Lord in Heaven have mercy on her soul! I didn't mean to tell you so suddenly, Winny, but it can't be helped now, and, besides, you'd have to know it some time. Three months ago, when the long summer days were in it an' the grass was green, we laid her in my father's

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grave back of Kilshannon Chapel. But sure we have no reason to repine, for she's gone to a better world, Winny, where she'll never feel cold or hunger, or sorrow any more. She wasn't taken short, either, thanks be to God!—she had a reasonable time to prepare, and your money provided her with every comfort in her last sickness. Biddy did all she could for her; if she had been her own child she couldn't have done more. She died as easy as a child, after giving us all her blessing. Her only trouble was that she couldn't get a sight of you, but she had a dream about you the very night before she died that eased her mind all of a sudden. She thought the Blessed Virgin came to her in her sleep, and told her not to fret about you, that you were under her protection, and that there was no fear of you. There now, Winny dear—don't cry that way—and still I'm glad to see you cryin', for it'll relieve your poor heart. You looked so wild at first that I didn't know what to do or say. Sure you wouldn't wish to have our mother back again in this troublesome world?—sure you wouldn't now, Winny?"

"Oh no, no," said the heart-struck mourner, "that wouldn't be right, but, then, to think that I have no mother—that's the thought that kills me, Con—just when I was plannin', day and night, how happy we'd all be when her and Biddy and the children would come out next spring or fall! Sure I never grudged any work I had to do, though God knows it was hard enough at times, because I thought it was for

my mother I was earnin', and my greatest comfort was that she didn't know how poorly I felt at times, and how ill able I was to work. And, then, I was always thinking of the happy days we'd have together, but now—now—that's all over—I'll never, never see her again in this world,—an' I've no one to work for now!" Throwing her apron over her head, as if to shut out a world that was now hateful to her, the poor girl wept and sobbed for some time unrestrainedly, for Con thought it best to let her cry it out. After awhile, however, he ventured to put in a word of remonstrance, his own tears flowing fast as he spoke.

"I declare now, Winny, "I'll leave the place, so I will, if you keep crying that way. It's thankful you'll be that your mother's gone to rest, when once you get over the first heavy sorrow. So dry up your tears, Winny, and let us talk the matter over quietly."

"But, tell me, Con," said his sister, uncovering her face, and making an effort to restrain her tears, "tell me, did you get any Masses said for her?"

"We did, indeed, Winny. Father Halligan said four Masses for her, besides the one that his curate, Father McDonnell, said the day of the funeral. And there wasn't a charity that Biddy gave since her death but was given with that intention. Oh! we didn't forget her, Winny; indeed we didn't. As far as our means would allow us, we done our duty."

"Well! God bless you for that same," sobbed Winny, "I know Biddy was ever and always a good

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daughter-in-law—may the Lord reward her! and for you, Con, I don't need to be told that you acted the part of a good son. But oh! oh! can it be—can it be that my mother is dead—dead and gone?" and wringing her hands, she burst into a fresh fit of weeping. Con could advise no better means of arresting this torrent of grief than by exciting Winny's wonder, which he happily had it in his power to do.

"What do you think, Winny," he said, in a low, mysterious voice, "but we heard the Banshee cryin' all round the house for three nights before my poor mother died! It's truth I tell you, Winny. You know the Banshee follows the O'Connor family—you remember poor Aunt Aileen that died when she was a slip of a girl, and how the Banshee was heard for nights and nights before her death. You never heard the Banshee, Winny?"

"No, but I often heard others say they did."

"Well, sure enough, this was the first time I heard it, and I hope it will be the last; it's such a lonesome, deathly cry, that it makes a body shiver all over. But none of us saw her, thanks be to God!"

The door-bell then rang loudly, and Winny hastily wiped her eyes to admit her master. The old man's mind was happily taken up with something else, so that Winny's swollen eyes passed unnoticed.

As soon as she had left up the tea in the dining-room, Winny hastened to give Con his supper, being anxious to get him off to his new home before the return of the housemaid, who was spending the

evening out, and whose cross-examination he wished to avoid in the present state of her mind.

To her mistress she said nothing as to what she had heard, for Mrs. Coulter had that measured and staid character which belongs to New England ladies, and the cold, formal accents of her condolence would have fallen drearily on the fervent heart of the Irish girl. "No! no!" thought Winny, as she looked at her, seated at the head of her tea-table, dispensing its comforts to her family with as much stiffness and formality as could possibly be thrown into the occasion; "no, no—the look of her is enough to turn one's heart into ice; she'd be only teasing me with useless questions; but, please God! I'll tell the master as soon as I get a chance. God bless his kind heart, with all his roughness, a body can't help warming to him."

As soon as she possibly could, after supper, Winny put on her bonnet and shawl, and sallied forth with Con in quest of a boarding-house. She knew of several kept by acquaintances of her own, but there were many points to be considered in a matter whose consequences might be so important both for time and eternity. The choice of a boarding-house seems a small thing, but it very often decides the fate of a stranger arriving in a place where all is new to him, and where he has to make, not only friends, but acquaintances. The character of his associates is, then, of the last importance, and may influence his whole after-life, whether for

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good or ill. Happily, both Winny and Con were fully sensible of this, and after some consideration, and much consultation, Con was received into the family of a certain Mrs. Maloney, a respectable widow from the next parish to that of Ballymullen, who contrived to support herself and three children by the profits of her boarding-house. The house was neat and clean, although scantily furnished, and, on the whole, Con thought the choice a good one.



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CHAPTER III.

CON O'REGAN was early at his post next morning equipped in a suit of working-clothes, purchased by himself and Winny over-night, and having announced himself as a new hand, was employed by the other men in one way or another till the arrival of Mr. Coulter, who made his appearance about eight o'clock. One of the partners came in soon after, and immediately noticed Con, who was wheeling out some empty boxes on a truck.

"I say, Mr. Coulter, who is that man that I just met at the door?"

"Can't say," returned the senior partner, drily: "how should I know who you met at the door?"

"Oh! I mean the man who is taking out those boxes. I never saw him before."

"Very likely. That's a man whom I engaged yesterday to assist in the warehouse. He'll make a capital porter, after a while."

"Yes, but aint he Irish? I thought we were to have no more of them here. We have quite too many as it is."

"I don't know as to that," said Mr. Coulter, with a sagacious shake of the head, and speaking very

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slowly; "I think where there is question of hard work there are none to come up to those very Irish. For my part, I have had many of them in my employment during the last twenty years, and I tell you now, as I often told you before, that I have generally found them industrious, sober, and every way trustworthy. And, then, you know yourself as well as I do, that they are much more civil and obliging. I can't for the life of me see why it is that there is such an outcry against them."

"There, now," said Pims, eagerly, "you admit that there is an outcry against them, and that proves that they deserve it. Americans are too fair and too honorable to condemn men without sufficient cause."

"Humph!" said Mr. Coulter, shrugging his shoulders, "there's one great property we have above all other people—that of blowing our own trumpet. Just let this poor Irishman alone—give him fair play, and see if he don't do his duty."

"You have certainly a strange way of talking, Mr. Coulter," said the other, reddening with anger at the sarcasm so bluntly conveyed in the first clause of the last speech. "You, at least, have not much of the American about you."

"Maybe yes and maybe no," said the imperturbable old man; "I'm not bound to follow the mass of my countrymen, or uphold them when they do wrong, am I?—I have a mind of my own, Master Pims, and what's more, I mean to have it as long as I live."

"Well! well!" cried Pims, pettishly, "keep it and

welcome, but I do wish you would consult Mr. Wood and myself before you draw those ignorant, hard-headed Irish Papists about us. Just at a time, too, when every respectable house in the city, indeed all New England over, is making it a point to get rid of them. It ill becomes us to give such an example."

"Hear him now!" said Coulter, as he turned the key in the lock of the office door, "what a fuss he makes about nothing! If you don't want to keep the young man here, I'll pay him out of my own pocket, and employ him on private business of my own. So let there be no more about it."

"Oh! as to that, Mr. Coulter, I guess neither Wood nor myself thinks any more of a few dollars a week than you do—it's the principle for which I contend."

The old gentleman threw back the office door with a loud bang, muttering something very like a consignment of his Know-Nothing partner (for there were Know-Nothings then as well as now, dear reader,) to the safe keeping of a most unpopular individual commonly known as "Old Nick," whereupon Pims, seeing that his blood was up, thought proper to betake himself to an upper loft where he was wont to exercise his authority. Happily there were none of the obnoxious race to arouse his kindling ire, for good Mr. Coulter contrived to keep all the Irishmen in the concern about himself, with the kindly intention of screening them, as much as might be, from the ever-watchful

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distrust of the junior partners, and the contemptuous dislike of the clerks.

As for Con O'Regan, he applied himself heart and soul to please his employers. Being warned, and, therefore, half armed, by the friendly advice of Mr. Coulter, he took care to leave nothing in the power of those who would desire nothing more than to find some plausible excuse for condemning him. "Well! it is hard enough, too," would he sometimes think as he wound his way to his lodging-house after a day of hard, unremitting toil; "here am I and three or four other poor Irishmen working like slaves from morning till night, doing all we can to please, and never getting one word of praise or encouragement from Monday morning till Saturday night, for even Mr. Coulter, God bless him! hardly ever speaks to us, unless to give us some orders. And then, if the least thing goes wrong with any of the gentlemen, we're all kept in hot water; it's nothing then but 'stupid Irish' and 'ignorant Paddies,' and the hardest names they can think of for us. Well! God be with poor old Ireland, anyhow!" and Con would invariably end his cogitations with a heavy sigh.

Very soon after he engaged in the warehouse of Coulter, Pims & Co., he went one evening to see Winny, who contrived as soon as she well could to send Leah, the housemaid, up stairs to do something for the young ladies. The coast thus clear she hastened to profit by the opportunity.

"And now, Con," said Winny, placing a chair for her brother near to where she sat, plucking a goose, "and now, Con, how do you like your new situation? I was thinking long to see you ever since, but couldn't manage to get out, for we had a good deal of company here."

She did not tell her brother what she knew would only fret him, that amid all this bustle her health was very indifferent, so that she had been at times hardly able to hold up her head.

"Well! on the whole, I can't complain, Winny, though, to tell you the truth, I don't feel at home in it. I know I'm earning far more than I could do in Ireland, but somehow—" he paused, cleared his throat, and then went on in a quick, tremulous voice, "but somehow—I know it's foolish in me to say so after coming so far to make money—but there's nothing like the truth—I'd rather do with less at home in Ireland, for, after all, Winny dear, 'home's homely,' and it's true enough what I heard the ladies and gentlemen singing often up at the big house,—

'Be it ever so humble there's no place like home.'"

Winny smiled, but her smile was mournful, for her heart had often echoed that sentiment in the loneliness of her dark cellar-kitchen during the five long years she had been from home. Often, when her heart was full even to overflowing, without one near of her own race or her own religion to whom

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she could impart even a portion of her overwhelming thoughts and feelings, she felt as though words would have been too small a purchase for one sight of the loved ones far away beyond the great ocean whose terrors she had braved to come to a land "of trial and unrest."

So she keenly felt the truth of what Con said, but it did not suit her to say so, and she tried to laugh him out of his melancholy.

"Why, Con, are you home-sick already?—didn't you know well enough before you left home that you were coming to a strange country, and, of course, you couldn't expect to find all things to your liking anywhere you'd go? but sure, after all, it's but natural for *you* to be sorrowful—you have Biddy and the children to think of."

"Well, I don't deny but what I think of *them* many's the time," returned Con, "but it isn't that altogether that makes me feel so strange here—oh, no! I'd get over that in time, for, please God, we'll have them out before very long, but it's the way they have here of treating Irishmen like dogs, just for all the world as if we were forcing in on them against their will."

"Oh now, Con," put in Winny, "it's hardly so bad as that. Don't be makin' it worse than it is."

"I'm not makin' it worse, Winny! I wish to God I could tell a better story, but there's no use blindin' our own eyes. Short time as I'm here, I have seen plain enough that America's very different

from what we thought it was. Why, don't you remember, Winny, how the people used to say at home, and ourselves amongst the rest, that there was no difference made here between Catholic and Protestant, or Irishman and Englishman—no matter where they came from, or who they were, we thought they were all welcome here, and that *cead mille faillthe* was the word to all strangers. Ah! Winny, Winny, weren't them mighty fine drames entirely? Isn't it a thousand pities that they're all gone before we're long in America?"

"Well! well! Con," said Winny, as she proceeded to the stove to singe her goose, "there's no use in lookin' back. Look straight before you, man, and try to make the best of it, now that you *are* here."

"That's just what I mean to do, with God's assistance. You know what we used to read in our Manson's Spelling-book long ago: 'Faint heart never won fair lady'—so I suppose the *fair lady* means good luck as well, and I've made up my mind to *have* good luck, or I'll know for what. But do you know, Winny, it pulls my courage down a peg when I think of all our friends and neighbors that are here so many years and have so little by them."

"Oh nonsense, Con, how could you expect such men as Paul Bergen and Tom Derragh to have either money or value?"

"No more I don't; it's not of them I'm thinking, for I see plain enough that the fault is mostly their

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own, but there's James Reilly and Pat Mulvany, and a good many others that we both know, steady, sober, hard-working men—they were that at home, and they're just the same here—well, I don't see that *they're* any better off than the others. It's true they live better, and their families are not in real downright hardship, like Paul Bergen's, but still it's only from hand to mouth with them, and it takes every penny they can make to keep things square. This is what disheartens me at times, Winny, and the more I think of it, it's all the worse. But I think it's gettin' late, and I'll have to be up early, for it's me that takes down the shutters and opens the doors this last fortnight or so."

"Well, then, you'd better go," said Winny, in as cheerful a tone as she could command, for her heart was heavy with the home-truths which Con had presented more clearly to her mind than they ever appeared to her before. "It's nearly nine o'clock, but just wait a minute till you bid Leah good night, I hear her foot stealing down the stairs."

Having shaken hands with the prim and neatly-dressed Leah, and wished her good night, Con took his way to his home for the time being, thinking all the way that Winny didn't look at all like what she used to do. "She used to be as merry as a kitten," thought he, "and as red as a rose; now she's dull and heavy, and melancholy-like, with no more color in her face than there is in a whin-stone. And then what's come of the fine Sunday clothes she said she

had? ne'er a one of them has myself seen, though we went to Mass together every Sunday since I came. Ah, Winny, poor Winny! I'm afeard it's what you left yourself bare and naked to send home money! and I suppose it's often the same story might be told of them that sends home money to Ireland!"*

It was only a few days after this visit to Winny that Con was invited by one Phil McDermot to a dance at his house, and Con, elated with the thoughts of meeting many old acquaintances, as he was assured he would, went to Mr. Coulter's that same evening to ask Winny to accompany him on the following evening. Great was his surprise when Winny shook her head and told him she couldn't go, and what was more, she didn't want to go.

"Why, sure you're not in earnest, Winny," and Con opened his eyes to their fullest extent; "what would ail you but you'd go? I'm sure there's no one in more need of a little diversion than you are, and what's more, I'll not go a step without you. So go you must!"

"No, nor *you*'ll not go either, Con—at least with *my* will, an' I think you'll hardly go against it."

* Con's surmise was perfectly correct, as all who take an interest in the Irish in America can truly testify. We have all of us known numerous instances of poor servant girls sending home several pounds in the course of a couple of years, from an average wages of *five dollars* a month.

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Con looked hard at Winny, to see if he could detect even the slightest semblance of a lurking smile, but there was none! Winny's face was even graver than usual, as she said:

"I'm quite in earnest, Con. These dances are very, very bad places of resort for young people. You know the penny dances, and the barn-dances and all such things were forbidden by the clergy at home, an' it's ten times worse they are here. No one that wants to keep up a decent character ever thinks of going to a dance of this kind. They say there's more mischief done at them night-dances than anywhere else. I might never face Father Timlin if I went, and besides I wouldn't go myself on any account, when I know it's wrong to do it."

"Well! but sure it wouldn't be any great harm to go now, Winny, when you'd have your brother with you?"

"Just as much harm as if I went alone, for I'd be giving you and others bad example, and putting myself and you, too, in harm's way, so say no more about it, Con, if you don't wish to grieve me to the heart."

"But what will Phil McDermot say?" persisted Con, still hardly convinced.

"Let him say what he pleases," returned Winny, with some sharpness. "He wanted to get you into his net, as he has got many another. It's him and the like of him that ruins many and many a decent boy and girl, enticing them into all sorts of bad

company for the sake of selling their dirty drop of poisonous liquor. They'll come to them with a friendly word and a deceitful smile, and talk to them about home, till they make them b'lieve they're the best friends they have in the world, an' all the time they'd sell them body and soul for sixpence. Say to Phil McDermot, indeed! just say nothing at all, but keep away from him altogether. If you don't b'lieve me, just ask the priest the first time you go to confession, an' you'll see what he'll say to you!"

"That's enough, Winny dear," said Con eagerly, seeing that his sister appeared rather annoyed at his pertinacity; "think no more about it, and neither will I. What the clergy set their face against must be bad everywhere, so I'll have nothing to do with these dances."

"God bless you, Con," said Winny fervently, her large dark eyes filling with tears of joy and affection; "you'll never be sorry for making that promise, if you have the grace to keep it. I know you were a great dancer at home, but keep from it here, Con, for it's different company you'd meet altogether."

So the brother and sister parted for that time, and Con went home well satisfied with himself, and grateful to Winny for her watchful solicitude.

The following day passed away without any remarkable occurrence, and as evening drew near, Con could not help thinking of the dance. Dancing had, for years, been his favorite amusement, and whether

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It was at "patron,"* wedding, or in competition for "the cake,"† Con was always first on the list. It was long since he had had "a good dance," and the very thought of it made him step more lightly, but then he could not think of disregarding Winny's advice, enforced as it was by the precepts of religion, for Con knew very well that night-dances in taverns or public houses were everywhere and always condemned by the Church as inimical to Christian morality. So Con manfully put away his longings after the flesh-pots of Egypt, and sent his thoughts homeward over the sea to the little thatched cottage under the sycamore tree, where he had left his young wife and her two little ones in anxious expectation of being soon sent for to America. And, please God, they'll not have to wait long," said Con within himself; "if I only keep my earnings together, I'll be able to get them out next spring, or at farthest in the fall, and won't we be all happy then? So I'll put all these foolish thoughts out of my mind, and not spend a shilling that I can help till I have enough

* The famous annual festivals he'd in the rural parts of Ireland from time immemorial, on the feast of the Patron Saint of the parish. The dance is always held in the open air, generally at some cross-roads, or on the smooth green sward of some sequestered vale.

† Dancing for the cake is, I believe, a custom peculiar to Ireland. The important edible is placed on high in view of all the company, and enviable is the lot of the "dancing pair," who, "by tiring others down," obtain the right to take down the cake. These dances are also held in the open air.

to send for Biddy and the children." On the second day after this, Mr. Coulter called Con into his office to dust it out, and taking up the morning paper which he had just laid down, he gruffly asked his new porter if he had been at a dance on the previous evening.

"No, sir," said Con, turning round in some surprise; "I was not, indeed."

"I'm glad to hear it," said the old gentleman, in a softer tone; "they're a bad business—a disgraceful business, these Irish dances, and if you're wise you'll have nothing to do with them. It seems there was one last night at a certain tavern kept by one McDermot, and, *as usual*, a number of the men got drunk; they then began to quarrel, and pitched into each other like fury, the watchmen effected an entrance, and took the whole party off to the station-house, where they spent the night. Yesterday morning they were all brought up for trial in the police court, and two of them were committed to jail under charge of 'assault and battery.' Several of the others were fined. There it is, you see, Con O'Regan,—how can Americans have any respect for people that act in such a way?—and this is quite a common occurrence—there's hardly a morning but we have such accounts of the winding up of 'dances.'"

Con stood aghast on hearing this disgraceful story. "And what are the names, if you please, sir, of the two men that were sent to jail?"

Mr. Coulter referred again to his paper. "Their

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paper. "Their

names?—ah!—let me see—yes, here they are—
Thomas Derragh and Bernard Brady. Well, Con,
what do you say to these countrymen of yours?—
ain't they fine fellows?"

"They're unfortunate fellows, sir, and nothing
else, that left their own country and came so far to
make a bad hand of themselves. God grant them
better sense; that's all I can say!"

The office was now thoroughly dusted, and Con
was glad to make his escape, in order to think over
what he had just heard. His first thought was gra-
titude to Heaven for having saved him from being
a sharer in the disgrace of these rioters. "If I had
been so headstrong as to go there," thought he,
"after all that Winny said, it's in jail I might have
been now with unfortunate Tom Derragh and his
companion. I suppose this Brady is one of the
'bricks' he talked of—the fine jolly fellows that lived
such a merry life. Ah! then, isn't it true enough
what the old people say in Ireland: '*They're well
guided that God guides*'" May the Lord keep every
creature out of bad company!—sure, the very thoughts
of havin' a body's name in the papers that way is
enough to make *me* tremble all over!"

In the evening he made it his business to see
Winny, in order to let her know what had hap-
pened. But he found Winny as well informed on
the subject as he was himself, Mrs. Coulter having
taken good care that she should hear it. Indeed,
that worthy lady was always on the look-out for

the police reports, having a singular desire to note the wild vagaries of "the low Irish," as she used to say. Those "reports" in which the Irish figured were carefully treasured in her retentive memory, and retailed with notes and comments, first to those of her own household—Winny, *of course*, included—and subsequently to all her visitors during the day. To Winny, Mrs. Coulter's remarks on these occasions invariably assumed a charitable, sympathizing tone, as though condoling with the poor girl on her irreparable misfortune in being connected with such disorderly characters by the double bond of country and religion. To all others, her husband included, the good lady spoke with all the fire of inspiration on the grievous sin committed by the government in not endeavoring to check the emigration of those degraded Irish, whose crimes were enough to draw down vengeance on any country.

"Softly, softly, my good Prudence," would her husband reply. "Do you think there are no crimes committed in this land except by the Irish? Pahaw, woman, don't make a fool of yourself. Some of the Irish are imprudent, I grant you, and will get drunk and come to blows; and, to tell the truth," he added in a lower voice, "their foibles are always made the most of, whether in police reports or private conversation—but after all, Prudence, they are not by any means addicted to the dark, secret, unmentionable crimes, which are of daily occurrence amongst other sections of the community. Better

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get drunk and blacken each other's eyes than to—do worse, Mrs. Coulter. I don't want to defend these wild doings of the Irish, but neither will I hear them accused of being worse than their neighbors. I tell you they are not. With all their faults even the very worst of them are no worse, in a moral point of view, than those around them. And then it can't be denied that the great majority of them are good citizens; honest, submissive to their employers, and able and willing to undertake the hardest work. Let us do them justice, then, and we shall not find them one-half as bad as they are made to appear."

"How is it, then, Mr. Coulter," said the indignant lady, "that they are in such bad repute all over the country?"

"All over New England, you mean."

"I don't mean New England alone—see how their idolatrous churches were burned lately in Philadelphia. I guess that is not in New England—is it?"

"Well! it's all the same, Prudence," returned the husband. "Philadelphia is just a huge chip of the old New England block. The reason of all this outcry against the Irish is pretty plain, in my humble opinion. Their religion is their great offence, deny it who will, and it's rather inconsistent for us, who pride ourselves on our descent from the old Puritans who left England, as they said, on account of religious persecution—I say, Mrs. Coulter, it is rather inconsistent for us to raise the banner of persecution

on this free soil, and cry down a whole people because they happen to profess a faith which don't go down well with Protestant Americans. But I know I might as well talk to the wall as try to remove your prejudices, so let us have dinner as soon as possible. I'm as hungry as a hawk, after all that talking."

Mrs. Coulter put on her most chilling look, and wore it all the time of dinner, to the no small amusement of her worthy husband, who cared little for sour looks so long as he had a good substantial dinner before him. As for Winny, she hid her blushes and her tears in the privacy of the kitchen, as it was Leah's duty to attend the table.



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CHAPTER IV.

A few days subsequent to the unfortunate dance at Phil McDermot's, Con O'Regan went, at Winny's request, to see how matters stood at Paul Bergen's. He found the household wearing a still more cheerless aspect than when he saw it last. Mrs. Bergen, it is true, was moving about, but still wrapped in her woollen shawl, and looking as though she ought to be in her bed. The baby was asleep in a cradle near the stove, and at a table in one corner sat Paul himself playing cards with three other men, all of them more or less under the influence of liquor, as was evident from their flushed cheeks and heavy eyes. So intent were they all four on their game that Con's entrance was happily unnoticed, except by Nora herself and some of the children. Making a sign to them to keep quiet, Mrs. Bergen motioned to Con to remain at the door, and going over to him, she said in a low, eager whisper: "For God's sake, Con, don't come in!—if you do, you'll not get away without losing less or more, for they'll make you play whether you will or no. You see they've all been drinking, an' they've just got in a quart of gin, so we're in for a night of it, God help us! Be off now as fast as you can before Paul sees you, but

come again soon, for poor Peter's very bad with me, an' I've had trouble to no end since you an' Winny were here. Not a word, now. Good night, an' God be with you." So saying, she literally pushed Con out, and hastily closed the door after him.

In a little truckle bed behind the cradle lay Peter moaning piteously, and tossing restlessly from side to side. It was evident that the boy had sustained some bodily injury which had, in all probability, caused his sickness, for his head was bandaged round and round, so that only the lower part of his face was visible. His mind was evidently wandering, for he kept muttering about one thing and another, in incoherent, broken sentences, not seldom giving utterance to some oath or imprecation that made his mother's flesh creep. On such occasions she would softly remind him of the presence of God, and that all such talk was bad and sinful, but Peter would only reply with a mocking laugh, or with language still more profane. "Water, water!" was the constant cry of his feverish delirium, and his mother's tears mingled with the draught as she every few minutes put it to his parched lips.

"Oh, child! child!" would poor Nora Bergen say almost aloud, forgetting, in the excess of her anguish, the presence of the drunken party at the table; "child! they have killed your soul as well as your body!—he'll die—he'll die, an' no more sense or feedin' in him than a stone, with them terrible curses on his poor parched lips. May the Lord in

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heaven look on us this night for a poor unfortunate family!—and then," she would add, as her eye fell on the swollen, lowering brow of Paul Bergen, who was every moment waxing more sullen as the small remains of his hard earnings went successively into the pockets of the other sharks, "and then to see his hard-hearted father sittin' there makin' a beast of himself an' spendin' the little that he has, when he knows right well that we haven't hardly a bit or sup in the house for our breakfast, an' poor Peter lyin', maybe in the jaws of death! Ochone! ochone! what'll we do, at all?"

All at once another wild notion entered Peter's brain. His father's voice reached his ear in loud altercation, and the sound awoke a dormant pulsation in the poor boy's heart. "Father! father!" he cried, raising his voice high above the clamor at the table; "father! I want some gin—give me some gin, father!"

"Indeed, then, I will, my son," said the besotted, but still good-natured father, laying hold of his tumbler, which was still half full of gin and water, "and it's glad I am to hear your voice again. You're better, aren't you?" leaning as he spoke over the sick-bed, with the tumbler in his hand.

No answer from Peter, but his mother started to her feet from where she had been sitting, or rather squatting, at the foot of the bed, and laying her hand on the glass, cried with wild eagerness:

"Why, Paul Bergen! are you mad?—sure it's ravin' the child is!"

"Ravin' or not ravin', I tell you, Nora, he must have what he wants—a little drop will do him no harm, but a deal of good. Don't be botherin' me with your nonsensical talk. Peter, don't you want some gin?" he asked, bending again over the senseless child.

"Yes, yes—gin—I want gin!" came distinctly from the dry, fever-cracked lips.

The glass was instantly at his lips, held by the unsteady hand of the drunken father, while the mother in vain tried to take it away, crying: "You'll kill him, Paul—oh, Lord! oh, Lord! you'll kill him!"

"Let me alone," was the answer; "don't you see how he drinks it down as if it was honey—I tell you it'll do him good."

The mother, seeing her efforts useless, wrung her hands and sank once more on her low seat at the foot of the bed, the children all setting up a piteous cry when they saw their mother in such distress. Jane went over to her and put her arm around her neck, beseeching her not to cry that way, though the tears were streaming from her own pretty eyes.

Paul having administered the potion to his son, said, with much complacency, as he laid his head back on the pillow: "There now, you unhappy wretch of a woman, you'll see he'll go to sleep now. Just let him alone, an' go an' mind your business."

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And with that he resumed his place at the table, where the game had been standing still awaiting his return. When he was gone his wife arose and bent over her son, who had really sunk into what appeared to her a profound slumber. His breathing was deep and heavy, but sufficiently regular to allay the maternal fears of poor Nora. The night wore on, and Jane put the children to bed, all except Patsey, who petitioned to be left up with his sick brother, to which his mother consented, having a strange presentiment at her heart that something was to happen before morning. In the utter loneliness and desolation of the moment, it seemed as if the company of Jane and Patsey was all she had to rely upon, and she heard with satisfaction the boy's request to be allowed to sit up. The two children seemed sensible themselves that there was a load of sorrow on their mother's heart, for they sat silent as death, nestling on the floor close by her side. On and on went the carouse at the table, though the cards had been latterly laid aside, Paul protesting that he wouldn't turn another card because he was left without a shilling in his pocket. But on and still on went the drinking and cursing, song after song being sung, or rather shouted, to the excruciating torment of Nora's aching head and breaking heart. On and on, too, went the deep breathing, or rather snoring of the sick boy, his mother ever and anon rising from her seat in order to ascertain whether any change was taking place, and at last, just as the clock of a

neighboring church told the first hour of morning, she noticed with terror that such was really the case. The soft, regular breathing had turned to a violent heaving of the chest; the lower jaw had fallen so as to leave the mouth wide open, and the nose had assumed that pinched look which too surely indicates approaching dissolution. Wildly uplifting the edge of the bandage which covered the lower part of the brow, the poor mother saw with horror that her son's eyes were open, but glazed and motionless, and the dreadful thought flashed upon her mind that her beautiful boy, the pride of her heart, was dying. In her agony, she shrieked out, "Paul! Paul! he's dying—run some of you for a doctor."

Paul was at her side in a moment, and the one look which he cast on the death-like face before him, sobered him effectually. Like a madman he rushed to the door and up the steps, not waiting even to put on his hat. The other men were almost as frightened as himself, and one or two of them would fain have assisted Nora in chafing the boy's stiffening limbs, but the poor mother motioned them away, for her soul loathed these drunken associates of her wretched husband.

"Keep off, every one of you," she cried, as with frenzied eagerness she continued her hopeless task, looking ever and anon at the distorted face, in hopes of seeing even a shade of consciousness; "don't touch him—I tell you don't lay a finger on him; he's going before his God without the chance of

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only spare him to get the rites of the Church; but
no—no—oh! he's goin'—he's goin'; och! och! will
he never come with the doctor? what's keepin' him
at all? Jane, Patsey, run, run an' see what's keepin'
them!" Here one long, painful moan escaped the
poor sufferer's blue lips—a few convulsive gasps, a
shiver ran through the whole body, the legs were
suddenly drawn up and then stretched at full length,
then a long, deep breath, and all was still. A soul
was gone to its account, and the hapless mother
sank on her knees beside the corpse, crying "Lord
have mercy on him! Mother of God pray for him
—oh, mercy! mercy—Christ have mercy on my poor
child!" It was the agony of faith as well as of
nature. The two children wept aloud, for they knew
that their brother was dead—they knew it by their
mother's wild, prayerful sorrow.

Just then Paul threw open the door and rushed in,
his face pale as death, and his hair hanging in thick
masses over his eyes.

"How is he now?" he cried, approaching the bed;
"that hell-hound of a doctor wouldn't come; he
called me a d——d drunken Irishman, and said the
brat might die and welcome for all the loss it would
be—well for him, he pulled in his head so soon and
shut the window, for I'd have brained the fellow with
a stone. There's another lives a block or two up
the other way, an' I ran in to see how he is before I

go any farther. But what's this, Nora—is he dead? —is he dead, woman? Why don't you speak?"

"He *is* dead, Paul," replied the heart-broken mother, raising herself with difficulty, and fixing a cold reproachful eye on her husband. "He *is* dead; as dead as ever you or I'll be. He needs no doctor now. You sent him home fast enough at last. Poor man! poor man!" she added, her voice assuming a somewhat softer tone, "there's no use in blamin' you—you hardly knew what you were doin' at the time—but och! och! I wouldn't be in your place for all the world—my own is bad enough—God He knows that." She then stooped and closed her son's mouth and eyes with surprising calmness, then kissed his lips and brow, and all without dropping a single tear, while all around her was tears and sobs. Even the hardened drunkards who stood by could not help sympathizing in this heavy calamity; and, as for Paul, his grief knew no bounds. He very naturally reproached himself for having at least hastened the death of his favorite child, and hence it was that, like Rachel, he would not be comforted. "My son is dead, and I have killed him!" was the only answer he vouchsafed to his late boon companions when they tried to comfort him. At last he worked himself into a kind of phrenzy, and seizing hold of two of the men, one with either hand, he shook them violently. "Only for you," he said, or rather shouted, "only for you and your cursed drink, my boy might be alive yet."

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Clear out, every mother's son of you, and never let me see the face of one of you inside my door. Be off now, or I might be tempted to do what I'd be sorry for doin' in my own house."

"We will, Paul—we will," said one, answering for the others; "God help you, poor man, it's no wonder you'd be out of your mind—God comfort you and your poor wife, this sorrowful night."

"No, no, Paul," said another, as they all took up their hats, "we'll not stay a minute longer than you wish."

Fortunately for the poor afflicted Bergens, these men, with all their faults, had Irish hearts, for they were not long gone when two women made their appearance, sent by their respective husbands to assist Mrs. Bergen in the sad task of laying out the corpse. This was a great relief to the poor woman, who would otherwise have had the whole dismal labor to herself.

"I'll give you a hand at any rate," said she, with pitiable calmness—the calmness of despair.

"Indeed, then, you'll not, Mrs. Bergen—the sorrow hand you'll lay on him—your load is heavy enough. God knows, poor woman, without havin' that to do, Dear knows, but it was the heart-scald all out for you to have them drunken vagabonds of ours, an' that Jack Duigenan in on you at such a time."

"Her own husband was worse than any of them, Mrs. Tierney," said Paul, rousing himself from his apparent lethargy; "there's not such a brute

livin' this night as Paul Bergen, an' that woman there before you—that Nora Bergen that you see there—is just the most miserable poor woman inside the city—search it all round. But this night will settle all that. With the help of Almighty God, they'll have good eyes that'll ever see me taste a drop again—neither gin, ale, nor brandy shall ever cross my lips, so long as God leaves me life. Do you hear me, Nora?"

"I do, Paul, I do," said Nora, in the same listless tone, and without raising her head. It was clear she had not much faith in the promise, solemnly and fervently as it was made. Poor Nora Bergen had heard but too many such promises made of late years without any permanent improvement in Paul's habits.

When Con O'Regan went to his dinner next day, he was met on the way by one of his acquaintances, who told him of what had happened. Con was very much shocked on hearing of poor Peter Bergen's death, and as soon as he could get away in the evening, he went to Mr. Coulter's to see if Winny would go with him to the wake. Winny had not even heard of the boy's death, and her heart was sore for the poor mother already bent to the earth with manifold affliction.

"Lord bless me, Con dear, how did it happen, at all?" said she; "was he sick, or was it an accident, or what?"

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went in there last night, poor Mrs. Bergen told me in a whisper that Peter was very bad with her—she wouldn't let me stay a minute, because Paul and some other men were drinkin' and playin' cards, and she was afeard I couldn't well get away if they once got a sight of me."

"God bless her," said Winny, fervently; "it's a thousand pities to see her amongst such a set, for she's a decent, well-conducted woman, as ever I knew, at home or abroad. If you sit down a minnit I'll just run up and see if missis will let me go with you for an hour or two."

Away went Winny to the front parlor, where the family were all assembled after supper. Mrs. Coulter was seated in a rocking-chair, swaying herself to and fro in perpetual motion, while she fabricated a comforter with large wooden knitting-pins. Her husband sat right opposite, deeply immersed in the contents of the evening paper. Their two daughters, one fourteen and the other eleven, were studying the lessons of the morrow, each with a formidable pile of books before her, some of them of dimensions which would have frightened our simple and less bookish ancestors.

"If you please, ma'am," said Winny, holding the open door by the handle, "would you just let me go out for an hour or two with my brother? There's a friend of ours that has a little boy dead, and we'd wish to go to the wake awhile. I've the tea-things

all washed up, ma'am, and Leah says she'll do anything you may want done till I come back."

"But these wakes, Winny," said Mrs. Coulter, very gravely, "I have always heard that they are very bad, indeed. I have never allowed any of my Irish help to attend wakes, and I really fear I must refuse. I don't see why you Irish will keep up these old heathenish practices in a civilized country."

"Well, ma'am, it's an old custom at home," returned Winny, hardly able to keep in her tears, "and we can't give it up here where we're all amongst strangers, as one may say. Death is always lonesome, ma'am, and it's a kind of a comfort to them that has it in the house to see their friends about them. But I suppose I'm not to go, ma'am, so I may let Con go by himself?"

"No, you shan't, Winny," said Mr. Coulter, speaking for the first time; "Mrs. Coulter, ma'am, you'll oblige me by allowing Winny to go."

The girls, too, chimed in to the same tune, for they both liked the gentle, good-natured Irish girl, and Mrs. Coulter was forced to yield, though she did it with a very bad grace. "You may go then for this time," said she to Winny, "but remember you must never ask to go to another wake so long as you are in my family."

"If I can help it I won't, ma'am," said Winny, with quiet humor as she closed the door and withdrew. Leaving her master and mistress to talk the matter over at their leisure, let us follow Winny

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and her brother to the house of death. They found some six or eight men and nearly as many women assembled in Paul Bergen's subterraneous residence. Paul himself was just placing some pipes and tobacco on a table, and Nora sat at the head of her own bed whereon the corpse was laid out. The wall beyond the bed was hung with religious pictures, furnished by the neighbor women, and the sheets on the bed were of well-bleached linen, the last poor remains of some comfortable homestead in the old country, carefully treasured for such purposes as the present, for the Irish peasantry always endeavor, if possible, to have, or at least procure, linen sheets for laying out their dead.* Every one present seemed grave and collected, under the strong impression that this was no time for laughter or merriment. All sympathized deeply with the bereaved parents, and if any one volunteered some casual remark on an indifferent subject, it was spoken in an under tone.

Nora seemed utterly heedless of all around, and sat with her clasped hands resting on her knees, rocking herself to and fro in that peculiar way practised by Irish mourners, her eyes cast down and her lips firmly compressed as though to keep in

* So common and so well recognized is this practice, that it is of frequent occurrence in all parts of Ireland for the wealthy to send every article required, linen sheets and pillow-cases, candlesticks, &c., to accommodate their poorer neighbors on such occasions, and enable them to lay out the corpse decently

the wild burst of sorrow that her heart ever and anon dictated. The entrance of Con and Winny, however, attracted her attention, for she could not avoid hearing Paul as he accosted them by name. Raising her heavy eyes to Winny's face she was touched by her look of heartfelt sympathy, and reaching out her hand to her she burst into a hysterical fit of weeping as she pointed to the bed. Winny and her brother knelt by the bed-side to offer up a prayer for the departed soul, and having discharged that pious duty they took their places in silence. By and by Mrs Bergen said to Con:

"Won't you come and look at him, Con?—you never had a sight of him when he was livin', for he wasn't in the house the day you were here, and last night you didn't see him either." As she spoke she raised the thin muslin covering from off the face, and Con and Winny were both struck with the uncommon beauty of the boy. His face was like that of a fair statue lying in the still attitude of death, and his long dark hair was carefully combed back, leaving a high, well-formed forehead visible. It was a brow that a phrenologist would have loved to look upon, but its fair smooth surface was marred and broken by a gaping, unseemly cut on the left temple. Neither Winny nor her brother could restrain their tears as they gazed, and the deep sobs of the remorseful father were heard from behind. No one spoke for a moment, till at length Con observed:

"He was very like yourself, Mrs. Bergen."

"Like what I once was," she answered, with a mournful smile, "but far, far purtier. Oh, Peter! Peter! it can't be you that's lyin' there—dead—dead—and that ugly wound on your poor forehead!"

A fresh burst of weeping followed. She let the cloth fall on the dead face, and sank once more into her seat. Con then ventured to ask Paul how the poor boy had come by his death. Paul was saved the painful task of answering by Larry Tierney, who, making an admonitory gesture to Con, gave him, in a low voice, the desired information.

"You see," said hé, "poor Peter was ever and always a stirrin' lad—and full of good-nature he was, too, they tell me, an' the makin' of a fine, clever fellow—but still, as I was sayin', he had a stirrin' way with him, an' was sure to be into any mischief that was goin'—well, the way that it is with us poor workin' people here in the city, we have no great time to look after our children, and poor Peter was most of his time on the streets, where you may guess that it wasn't the best company he took up with. The day that he got this unlucky blow he had been out from the time he got his breakfast in the mornin', and comin' on the evenin', he got a squabblin' with some vagabond boys about something or another, an' what would you have of it but one of the young imps took up a sharp stone and flung it right at Peter's head. It struck him on the temple there where you saw the wound, an' the poor fellow dropped down dead, as

every one thought. But he wasn't dead, for he came to himself while the wound was a-dressing, and if it hadn't been for a swill of gin that poor Paul gave him when he was in his cups last night, he might have lived, for the doctor that he was taken to before he was brought home, examined the wound, an' said it would hardly kill him. So you see it's a bad business altogether."

"Bad enough, indeed," said Con, while Winny, who had been also a listener, wiped away the big tears that would not be kept in,—“tell me this, honest man, do you think Paul has enough to bury the child?”

"I'm afeard not," said Larry, with a rueful shake of the head. He then proceeded to inform Con how Paul had been fined for that unlucky affair at the dance, and how he spent most of what he earned "very foolishly," but Larry did not tell how he himself had won nearly two dollars of the residue of Paul's funds on the previous night. Another man here interposed, and told Con in the same cautious tone that they were making up enough to pay the expenses of the funeral. "It's all amongst ourselves, you know," said he, "and we have nearly what we want now. Not one has refused us yet only that rap Phil McDermot—an' it ill became *him* to refuse, the white-livered spalpeen—him that has got so much of poor Paul's hard earnin' in his time." He had unconsciously raised his voice in giving utterance to this philippic.

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"What's that you say?" said Paul Bergen;
"what about Phil McDermot?"

"Oh! nothing worth speakin' of," replied his
friend; "a decent man ought to wipe his mouth
after mentionin' his name—he's a disgrace to the
country he came from, so he is!"

Paul inquired no further at that time, but when
the funeral was over, and poor Peter laid decently
in the Catholic burying-ground with a little white
headboard bearing his name and age in black letters,
Paul made it his business to find out what it was
that Phil McDermot had done to merit such a
character. On hearing what had happened, he went
directly and paid that respectable individual a few
shillings which he owed him, assuring him that that
was the last money he should ever receive from him.
"An' withal," said he, "you have given me a lesson
that I'll never forget. Sorrow and misfortune have
made me a wise man, and for the time to come it's
my poor family that'll get the good of my earnings,
and not the likes of you."

McDermot would have inquired what all this
meant, declaring himself innocent of any intentional
offence, but Paul would not hear a word from him,
and left the house, indignantly refusing the peace-
offering which Phil would have had him take in the
shape of "a glass."

CHAPTER V.

ABOUT a week after the death of Peter Bergen, Mr. Coulter on returning from dinner one day told Con that Winny wished to see him immediately.

"To see me," repeated Con, in a faint voice; "why, sir, is there anything wrong with her?"

"Don't be frightened, Con," said his employer, in a kind tone; "I believe there is nothing serious, but she don't feel very well, and—and—in fact, she thinks of going to the hospital!" The worthy man's hesitation proceeded from his unwillingness to tell what was really the case, that his wife insisted on Winny's removal without delay. His own kind heart recoiled from the idea of sending to an hospital the girl who had served them so faithfully for four years, especially as her disease had nothing in it that could excite fear of infection.

"To the hospital, sir!" cried Con, his face pale as ashes, for the Irish people have, above all others, an instinctive horror of hospitals; "oh, then indeed, it's low enough Winny is when she'd go to an hospital. May I go now, if you please, sir?"

"Certainly, Con; go as soon as you can."

Poor Con could hardly wait to fetch his hat from an inner room, but having secured it, he was hastening away with a heart full of sorrow, and throbbing with impatience to see Winny, when at the door he was met by Mr. Wood, who accosted him with:

"What's all this, O'Regan—where are you going?"

"I'm goin' down to Mr. Coulter's, sir," replied Con, evasively; "he sent me himself;" and without waiting for further interrogation, he brushed past and was some way down the street before Mr. Wood recovered from his surprise.

"What a confounded smart chap he is!" was Wood's mental soliloquy, "one would suppose he was running for a wager."

On reaching the house, Con was ushered by Leah into a small room, or rather closet adjoining the kitchen, where he found his sister in bed, and looking so pale and emaciated that he could hardly believe it to be the same Winny he had seen four or five days before. But when Winny held out her hand to him with that sweet mournful smile peculiar to herself, he burst into tears and cried: "Winny, Winny, what's come over you at all?"

"Sit down there on that chair, Con, and I'll tell you. There's something gatherin' on me this twel'-month and better—something like a smotherin' on my chest, an' a great pain in my left side—still I didn't like to tell you, because I was in hopes it would wear away, but instead o' that, it's what it's gettin'—it's every day, an' this last week I

have hardly had a minute's peace. The mistress used to say all along that it was only imagination, and sometimes she'd tell me it was making believe I was—that's what we call schemin', Con, but since I had to take to my bed entirely—that was last night—her whole trouble is to get me away to the hospital, for, even if it's nothing taking I have, she says there's no way here for me, and that I must get off this very day, for she wants to get in another girl in my place."

Con's tears had not ceased to flow during this recital, protracted as it was by the many breaks which Winny's weakness rendered necessary. "The master said something," said he, "about you going to the hospital, but he cut it very short, and sent me off here to you."

"Ah! the blessing of God be about him now and forever," said Winny with moistened eyes, "it isn't with *his* will I'm going to the hospital. Leah tells me that himself and the mistress had a great debate about it, and he told her it was a burnin' shame to send me out, but at last he had to give in, for she took on at a great rate, and then, when he could do no better, he came and bid me good-bye, and slipped this ten dollar bill into my hand to help to pay my expenses in the hospital. If he was one of ourselves, a thousand times over, he couldn't be kinder than he is and has been to me,—and mind, Con, I lay it on you, whether I live or die, that you'll do Mr. Coulter a good turn if ever you have it in your power."

This made Con's tears flow afresh, but he assured Winny that he felt as grateful himself to Mr. Coulter as she did, and would always consider him a friend. "But for God's sake don't talk of dying, Winny," he added, his voice quivering with emotion; "don't now, an' I'll do anything at all you ask me."

"Well! well! Con, I'm not dead yet, anyhow, and you know very well that my talking of it won't bring it about—if it's the will of God I'll die, and if not I'll live—so don't be cast down, Con—leave it all in the hands of God, and then take whatever happens for the best. But you must get a carriage or something that way, and take me to the hospital—that's the first thing to be done."

This made Con tremble all over. He tried to speak but the words stuck in his throat, and he forced a cough in order to clear his voice; taking up his hat, he said: "Well! I suppose I must see about it. Where's the—the hospital, Winny, or what hospital is it?—hem!"

"There's a charity-hospital, Con," said Winny, after taking a draught of cold water from a mug which stood on a chair beside the bed, "where we have to pay nothing at all, and our own clergy go there regular—it's true," she added, hesitatingly, "I'd rather not go in on charity so long as I have means to pay, but what I have wouldn't last long, and, besides, if I died you'd want it to bury me."

All this was said in a quick, hurried voice, as if

Winny wanted to get through with it, and when she had ended, she drew a long breath, as if relieved of a heavy burthen.

"Well, but don't you know, Winny," said her brother eagerly, "that I have ten dollars by me, and you have Mr. Coulter's ten dollars—that makes twenty, you see, besides your own."

"And do you think, Con, that I'd let you spend your ten dollars that way, an' you wantin' so badly to send it home?—no, indeed, not a penny of it. Instead of that I thought I'd be able to help you to send for Biddy and the children, but I suppose that's all over—well, we must only do the best we can, and leave the rest to God."

Con went off at length, commissioned by Winny to do as he liked, "and God direct him for the best." So he found out the hospital after a long search, and made arrangements to have Winny admitted; then procured a carriage, and, wrapping Winny up in her warmest clothes, kindly assisted by Leah, he removed her from the house that had been her dwelling for four long years, with nothing more than a cold "good-bye" from Mrs. Coulter, who graciously descended to the door to see her off.

"Good-bye, Winny," said the lady; "I hope you'll be well soon. Take good care of yourself." And with this admonition she closed the door, and returned to her luxurious parlor, where she soon forgot all about Winny in the fascination of the last new novel.

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Poor Winny was very soon comfortably settled in one of the wards of the hospital, and then her first care was to have Con bring her the priest. "Go to Father Timlin," said she, "before you go to your work, and ask him if he can at all to come and see me. Tell him," said she, "that there's no danger of death—at least very soon—but it's well to get the rites of the Church as soon as possible. Now, Con, don't cry that way—you know very well that having the priest won't make me any worse, but a great deal better. Maybe he can't come to-day, but if not, I hope he'll try and come to-morrow. And, do you hear, Con," for he was turning away in speechless sorrow, "go down this evening, and see how poor Mrs. Bergen is getting on, and bring me word when you come again. Go, now, Con," and she reached out her thin, skinny hand, which her brother squeezed between his own; "go now, and God bless you! Don't be frettin' about me, but pray for me, and come again as soon as you can."

"I will, Winny!" was all that Con could say, as he left the room, not daring to look again at the poor girl, who had all along endeavored to conceal from him the actual extent of her suffering. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when Con got back to the warehouse, and, finding that Mr. Coulter was out, he said nothing about where he had been. No questions were asked of him, but when Saturday evening came round, Con found that he

was paid half a day short. "Well!" said he to himself "I wasn't half a day away, but then I suppose it's all right. I mustn't say anything about this to Mr Coulter for I know very well he'd make a fuss, and there's no use in the like of that. I'll get over the loss."

When Con went to see Mrs. Bergen, on the evening of the day on which Winny went to the hospital, he was agreeably surprised to find her much more cheerful than he had seen her since he came to America. Paul was sitting at the table reading, and laying down his book on Con's entrance, he came forward to meet him with outstretched hand.

"You look as if you hardly thought it was me was in it," said Paul, with a smile that he wished to make a cheerful one, but could not succeed—it was a wintry smile, at best, for grief was still heavy at his heart, "and I don't wonder at your bein' surprised, for I almost wonder at myself to be at home e'er an evenin' without some pot-companions helpin' me to make a beast of myself. Sit down, Con, an' take air of the fire."

"Yes, Con," said Nora, as she in her turn, shook hands with the visitor, "you see we have a good fire now, an' what's more, we have plenty to eat an' drink, an' best of all, Con, we have peace an' quietness. Thanks an' praises be to God, if He afflicts us in one way He makes up for it in another."

"Well, I'm sure," said Con, "you all look twenty pounds better than you did last week, and more of

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that to you, I pray God." He did not think it expedient to inquire how such a change was effected all at once, but Nora anticipated his curiosity.

"I see," said she, "you don't like to ask how all this was brought about, but I'm sure you can't but guess. Paul has never tasted a drop of any kind since—since our heavy loss—an' he went to his duty the very day after the funeral, an' he's to go again towards the end of the week. So, with God's help, there's no fear of him but he'll keep from the liquor now. I declare to you, Con O'Regan, it's in heaven we are ever since, an' you'd wonder at how easy we find it to get the little wants of the house, though it's only a week since Paul left off drinking."

"And sure Patsey and Jim go to school, and me, too," said Jane, anxious to communicate a share of the good news."

"Well, indeed, I'm proud an' happy to hear it," said Con, "especially as I have bad news myself."

"How is that?" cried Paul and Nora in a breath; "is there anything wrong with Winny?"

"Indeed then there is," said Con, with a heavy sigh. "I left her in the hospital this afternoon."

"The Lord save us! an' what in the world is the matter with her?"

"Well, myself doesn't rightly know, but I'm afeard it's decline. If it isn't, it's very like it, though I didn't say so to her. She wanted so badly to know how you were all getting on here that I had to promise I'd come and see you this evening."

"Poor Winny, it's just like her," said Paul. "You must go and see her to-morrow, Nora—that is, if you're able at all."

"Oh! I'm able to go further than that, never fear, and if I were weaker than I am now, I'd make my way to see Winny O'Regan, an' her sick among the cowl'd strangers in an hospital. No one knows but God Almighty and myself how much I owe to that same girl. Many and many's the time she brought me comfort when I had very little, though dear knows I used to scold her often for layin' out her penny of money on me that had my husband earnin' good wages every week of his life."

"The wages were good enough, Nora," said Paul quickly, "but you weren't much the better of them, and poor Winny knew that well enough. But never mind, Nora, with God's help, your darkest days are past, never to come back again."

"God grant they may, Paul, but remember no days are to say dark for me if you only keep sober, and set these poor children a good example. I can bear poverty, and sickness, and hard work—anything at all that God is pleased to send, but drunkenness, and cursin', and swearin', and all such things, and seein' my little place filled so often with graceless vagabonds—that's worse than death to me, and so long as I don't see any of it about me, I'm ready for anything that comes across."

"Well, well, Nora," said her husband, "there's no use in makin' too many promises, but I tell you over

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again that there's a great change in my mind ever since the night that poor Peter died.—I feel a disgust in me for the liquor and them that used to help me up with my bad doings, and, please God, you'll never see me as you have seen me. But what's your hurry, Con?" seeing him stand up and take his hat.

"Oh, well, it's drawing near nine o'clock, and I have to be up early in the morning. Good night."

Faithful to her promise went Nora Bergen next day to the hospital to see Winny, and when she left there some half hour after, she had with her a certain bundle containing Winny's clothes, which she insisted on taking home to wash. In vain did Winny assure her that she had plenty of under-clothes for some weeks to come, and that she had too much to do already for her own family.

"No matter for that," said Nora, "I haven't so much to do but I can wash the few things you'll have, and, please God, I'll do it every week as long as you're here. If I can, I'll bring them myself towards the end of the week, but if not, I'll send Patsy with them. So God be with you, Winny dear, till I see you again. Mind, now, and get well soon—just make your mind as easy as you can, and don't keep yourself back with fretting and pining."

As for poor Con, he could hardly hold up his head while Winny's case was still undecided. He went through his work with mechanical exactness, but the cheerful spirit that sustained him was for the time broken. One thought was ever present to his

mind, that he was about to lose the sister who had done so much for him and his; the sister who was the sole bond between him and the pleasant past that lay smiling far away in the haze of time; the one true friend to whom he could confide all his troubles, ever sure of obtaining both sympathy and advice. What was to become of him in that dreary ocean of a city if Winny died, and died amongst strangers, to be buried in a foreign soil where no kindred dust awaited her? Full of these mournful thoughts, Con moved through the routine of his daily duties, feeling like one whose heart was dead within him. Weeks and weeks passed away thus, and Winny's little funds were all gone, and after them went Con's ten dollars, for it was he that always paid the hospital expenses, so that Winny knew nothing of what they amounted to. Things began to look black with Con, for he had now no resource but to draw his own wages in advance, a thing he had a great reluctance to do. But there was no alternative, so Con took heart of grace and asked Mr. Coulter if he wouldn't be pleased to give him a few dollars in advance at his next payment.

Mr. Coulter knitted his brows, and began to look very cross—eyeing Con through his spectacles, he demanded: "What do you want the money for?—I thought you had some saved—eh?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, sir," said Con blushing like a young maiden, "I had a little money—ten dollars or so—but it's all gone, and Winny's,

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too, since she went to the hospital. So if you'd be good enough, sir, to advance me a few dollars, it would serve me very much, for I have no other way now of paying for poor Winny. You needn't be afraid, sir, for you know you can stop a dollar a week out of my wages till it's paid up."

Mr. Coulter put his hands behind his back, and took a few turns around the small room, as was his wont when lost in thought. Con watched him anxiously, fearing that he was about to refuse, and then what was he to do? But not so, Mr. Coulter suddenly stopped short in front of Con, and said, rather sharply:

"And pray how long is this to go on?—have you thought of that in your wisdom?"

Con's voice was husky with emotion as he replied: "It can't last much longer, sir. Either Winny will get better soon, or—or"—he could not finish the sentence, but turning away, took out his handkerchief, and pretended to use it, in order to conceal his tears.

Mr. Coulter said nothing for a few minutes, but resumed his march as before. When he did speak there was something in his voice that told of some hidden feeling which his words belied.

"You, Irish," said he, "are the most improvident people, I do believe, on the face of this habitable globe. Here, now, you might as well have placed Winny in the free hospital, and have saved your money and hers. But I see there is no such thing

as teaching you prudence or economy—here is a ten dollar bill—go off now to your work, and say nothing of this to Mr. Pims on Saturday night—that is, unless he speaks of it himself. Which is very unlikely,” added the merchant to himself, “inasmuch as he shall never know anything of it.”

Con would have thanked his generous employer but his thanks were cut short with a stern command to go about his business—there was no need of thanks.

Now the only time that Con could visit his sister during the whole period of her illness, was just at dinner-hour, as there was no admission for visitors either early in the morning or late in the evening, and it was his practice on the days that he went to see her, to content himself with a few mouthfuls of anything he could get, in order to have time for his visit. On the day in question, he provided himself with a few crackers, and hurried away to the hospital as soon as twelve o'clock struck. How great was his joy to find Winny much better, and more cheerful than he had seen her since her removal to the hospital. She told him the doctor had just been there and had declared her decidedly better. “He says,” she added, “that all I want now is care and proper nourishment. So you see, Con, I’m worth two dead people yet, though I know very well you were making up your mind this time back to let me go.”

Her brother's joy was too deep for words. He could only shake the emaciated hand held out to

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him, and squeezed it hard, hard. That moment re-
paid him for all the sorrow, all the anxiety he had
undergone, and he felt as if nothing could ever
again make him repine, since there was a prospect
of Winny being restored to him.

"And now," said Winny, "we may begin to talk
again of getting Biddy out, and the children. With
God's help I'll be round again, very soon, and when
we both lay our heads together, we'll get over this
back-set. How much money have we now, Con?"

Now this was a puzzling question, for Con did
not like to tell his sister all at once that they were
both penniless, and yet he knew not how to evade
it, except by stating a falsehood, which he could not
do on any account. To his great relief, he just
then heard a neighboring clock strike one, and Con
sprang up at once, saying: "I'll tell you some other
time, Winny. Good-bye, now, and be sure you
take good care of yourself, now that you're on the
mending hand. I must be off to my work, for there
it's one o'clock."

As soon as Mr. Coulter returned to the ware-
house after dinner, Con hastened to let him know
the favorable change that had taken place in Winny,
and, though the old gentleman spoke but few words,
it was quite clear from his manner that he was well
pleased to hear the news.

From that day forward, there was a visible im-
provement in Winny's health, and in the course of a
week she was able to sit up a little every day. Her

recovery, however, was not very rapid, so that two weeks more had elapsed before she was discharged from the hospital. Mrs. Bergen came on the day appointed for Winny's removal, and helped to dress her as though she were a little child.

"And now," said Winny, "that I'm ready to go, where am I to go to?" She smiled as she spoke, but her smile was a sad one.

"Where would you go to," retorted Nora, "but to our house? It's a little more comfortable than it used to be, thanks be to God, an' if you'll just put up with it, you'll be as welcome as if you were our own child. Not a word now—not one word, but bid good-bye to the nurses and let us be off."

Opposition here would have been an unpardonable offence, as Winny knew very well, so she had nothing for it but to do her friend's bidding, and follow her down the stairs submissive as a little child. When the children came home from school in the afternoon, Mrs. Bergen sent Patsey to inform Con of his sister's whereabouts, and when evening came he made his appearance, looking the very picture of contentment.

"Well, now," said he, "if we only had Biddy and the children here, sure enough we'd be as happy as kings and queens."

"And maybe a great deal happier," observed Winny; "riches can't buy happiness any more than they can buy health. That's one comfort for the poor." Winny had never heard of the truism:

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"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," but she was well acquainted with the Christian axiom: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and hence she never dreamed of envying the rich, nor of sighing for more than her allotted portion of earth's goods, and assuredly her portion was a small one.

"I was just thinking of poor Tom Derragh," said Paul; "what do you think, Con, but himself and Barney Brady are lyin' in jail ever since that unfortunate dance. God help us for poor Irish," he added with a heavy sigh. "We're foolish enough, there's no denyin' it, but then there's no one to take a hard word off us—our failings are sure to be made the most of. If you'd just hear the people in the court, the mornin' that we were all tried, ay! indeed, even the very lawyers, ridiculin' the Irish, an' some of them takin' off our way of speakin' to our very faces. But after all," said Paul, thoughtfully, "sure, isn't it our own fault? If we had only the proper spirit in us we wouldn't lave ourselves in their power as we do."

"That's true enough," said Con, "but still there seems to be something in their mind against us. Do what we will, the most of them are down on us. And Paul, do you know what I was often thinkin since I came here?"

"What's that, Con?"

"Why, that there must be some place where we could do better than we do here. You see how many strong, healthy Irishmen there are in this very

city, wearing away their lives at hard work of every kind, an' spending their money just as they make it—sometimes before it's made—and living in holes and corners, wherever they can get a place to stick themselves and their families into——"

"Just like us, Con," said Paul, with a good-humored smile, "burrowin' like rabbits down in the ground. But there's thousands of our poor country people worse off even than we are," he added, with much feeling. "You haven't seen them half as bad as they are. If you knew the state they're in as well as I do, then you might talk. Why, there's houses in this very city, Con, where there's ten or twelve Irish families in one house, an' not a very big house, either. An' as for the drinkin' and boozin' and fightin', that comes from there being so many of them cramped up together, there would be no use in me tryin' to tell it to you, for I couldn't. What you saw here in my mad fits was nothing at all in comparison. Dear knows, Con, there's some great change wanted among us—however it may be brought about."

"Why don't some of you go to the country?" inquired Con; "wouldn't you get work out on the farms?"

"Well, I suppose so," said Paul, "but I know some that tried it, and they didn't seem to like it very well. The farms all round here belong to Americans, and wherever they can get their own to work for them, they'll not have others. They're no

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better friends to the Irish—these Yankee farmers—
than the townspeople—and you see yourself how it
is with *them*. God help us, I say again!"

"He will help us," said Winny, softly, "if we only
try to help ourselves. We mustn't leave all to Him.
I think, Con dear, it's time you were moving home—
Home!" she repeated, with a melancholy smile; "will
you ever have a home?—God only knows."

Con smiled and shook his head, but said nothing.
"You must have one of some kind when Biddy
comes out," continued his sister.

"Well, I suppose so," said Con, in no very cheer-
ful tone, as he shook hands with Mrs. Bergen and
Paul. A heavy sigh escaped him, but he forced a
short cough in order to conceal it, and told Winny
he would come again on the following evening.

All the way home he was thinking of what Paul
had been saying, and he asked himself over and over,
"Isn't it a hard fate to be toiling forever for other
people, and never be putting anything by for the
time to come? If a body had a bit of land now—
ever so little—that he could call his own—then there
would be some use in working—then every day's
work we did would be so much laid up for ourselves
and our families. Isn't it a queer thing all out that
so many shut themselves up in towns this way,
where most of them never rise higher than day-
laborers, and them all—one might say—used to a
country-life at home! Well now, I declare, that
must be the great reason that they don't do well.

If God would only give me the chance of gettin' settled on a farm, I think I'd be a happy man!"

Full of these thoughts Con lay down on his cot-bed, after saying his prayers devoutly, and dreamed that he saw Biddy milking one of some half a dozen fine cows, while he himself was threshing wheat in a large barn.



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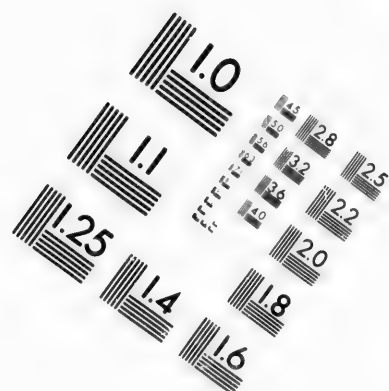
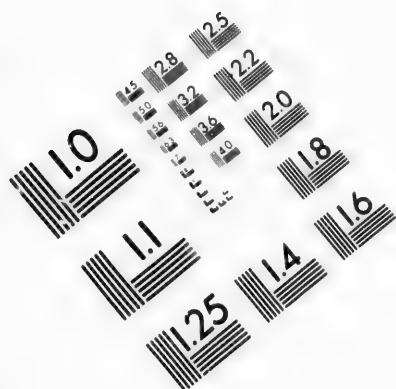
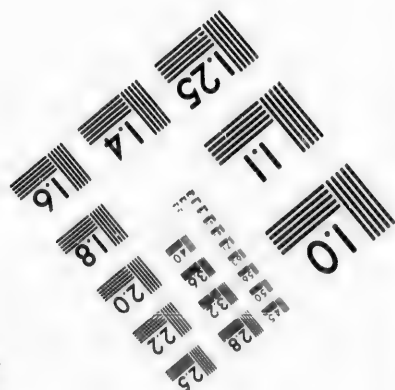
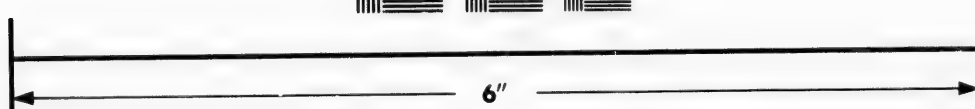
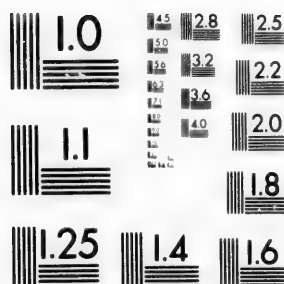


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CHAPTER VI.

THE first opportunity that Winny got she renewed her inquiry after the money, and heard with sorrow that her brother's little hoard was gone as well as her own. Not that Winny cared about the money for its own intrinsic value, but because it delayed for an indefinite time the sending for Con's wife and children.

"Well, Con," said she, after a pause, "you wouldn't take my advice, and put me in the free hospital. If you had, I'd have been just as well now, and we'd have had our penny of money safe. But sure I know you done it all for the best, and there's no use frettin' about what can't be brought back. But tell me this, Con?" she added, with newly-awakened anxiety, "did you think of making an offering for the dead on All Souls' Day?"

"Indeed, then, I did, Winny!—I gave Father Timlin a dollar with that intention, but you were so bad at the time that I didn't care to say anything about it to you. Oh! bedad, it would never do, Winny, to forget them that can't do anything for themselves. If we did, we couldn't expect others to

remember us when it comes our turn to be in the fiery prison."

"God bless you, Con, but it's you that has ever and always the good thought!—I'm well pleased to hear that you did what you ought to do that day, and you may be sure you'll be nothing the poorer of what you gave, at the year's end."

Mrs. Bergen here came in with something which she had been purchasing at the market. It was Saturday evening, and she had to wait for Paul's wages before she could go to make her purchases for Sunday. Setting down her basket, she drew a long breath, observing, with a smile, as she shook hands with Con:

"It's hard work that for a person that's not very strong, but sure it's thankful I am to *have* meat to bring home. But what's become of Paul, Winny?"

"Oh! he's gone to see about making up that money for Barney Brady's family. He thought Saturday night was the best time to go out when the men would all be after getting their wages."

"An' who's gone with him?" asked Nora, in visible trepidation.

"Andy Dwyer he called him. He seems a very decent man."

"An' so he is, Winny," said Mrs. Bergen, with renewed cheerfulness; "there's not much fear of Paul falling in with bad company so long as Andy Dwyer's at his side. God forgive me! I was afeard he had got in with some of the old set again!—Well, Con,

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what's the news? Don't you find this girl of ours
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"Indeed, then, I do, Mrs. Bergen, she's coming
round nicely, thanks be to God. And after Him,"
he added, with a meaning smile, "I think there's
somebody else deservin' of thanks. Well! well! I
hope there's a good time coming!—we'll not be al-
ways as far behind as we are now. But I believe
it's most time to be on the road."

"Ah, then, sure you wouldn't think of going,
Con," put in Mrs. Bergen, "till you hear how Paul
and Andy got along with their collection; Lut, tut,
man, sit down—you'll be time enough this hour yet!"

Con was easily persuaded, being really anxious to
hear the result of Paul's charitable undertaking.
All at once, Mrs. Bergen gave an exclamation of sur-
prise: "Why, Jane," addressing her daughter, "who
in the world scrubbed the floor?"

"Why, indeed, mother, it was Winny that did it,"
replied the little girl, who sat by the stove with the
baby on her knee. "Baby woke up before you
were long gone, and I had to sit under him ever
since. So Winny went to work and scrubbed up
the floor while a body would be lookin' at it. I
told her she'd catch it when you'd come back, but
she wouldn't heed what I said, only laughed at
me."

This made Mrs. Bergen downright angry. "Well,
now, I tell you what it is, Winny O'Regan," said
she, with a bright glow on her still handsome fea-

tures, "if you had struck me across the mouth you couldn't have given me a greater affront. Wasn't it a purty thing now—I leave it to yourself! —to see a girl just only a few days out of the hospital goin' down on her two knees to scrub a dirty cellar floor? I'm ashamed of you, Winny—that's just what I am!"

In vain did Winny declare herself fully strong enough for the task she undertook, winding up with an assurance that she did not feel the least fatigued. Mrs. Bergen cut her short with:

"No matter for that—I tell you, it was a shame for you, and I'll have the same scrubbin' in my nose for you this many a day!"

Con enjoyed the fun amazingly, and laughed heartily at Mrs. Bergen's good-natured scold. The debate was soon brought to a close, however, by the entrance of Paul and his friend Dwyer, who was, it seemed, purse-bearer on the occasion.

Neither Paul nor Andy appeared in good spirits, which made the others fear to ask how they had succeeded, till at last Dwyer, having warmed his benumbed hands at the stove, began to turn out the contents of his pockets on the table, and Mrs. Bergen seeing the heap of silver assuming larger and larger proportions every minute, could contain herself no longer—

"Why, then, I declare, but ye haven't done so bad after all?" she cried.

"An' who said we did?" rejoined her husband,

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gruffly, as he took his place in front of the stove,
leaving Andy to reckon the money.

"Well, nobody *said* it to be sure," replied his
wife, with a deprecating air, "but somehow both of
you looked so down-hearted like, that I thought
you didn't do as well as you'd wish."

"Oh! in regard to the money," said Andy, sus-
pending his reckoning for a moment, "we have no
reason to complain. I think you'll all wonder when
I have the amount calculated. No! no! Mrs. Ber-
gen, it was quite another thing made us down-
hearted, as you say. If we didn't dear buy that
money no two men ever did. I never went out to
collect before, at least in this country, and, upon
my veracity, it'll be long before I go out again—
that is," he added, "unless something past the com-
mon turns up. Tell them, Paul, all that happened,
while I count this money."

"What can I tell them," said Paul, still in the
same sulky humor, "only that there isn't such a
curious set of people in the world wide as we are.
Con O'Regan, I wish you had been with us this
night, an' then you'd see what I was often tellin'
you, that there's plenty of Irish people in this very
city just as poor as any in Ireland, an' God knows,
that's sayin' enough for their poverty! We climbed
up four and five pair of stairs this very night in
twenty different houses, I'm sure and certain, divin'
into little dark rooms on every lobby where you'd
scarcely see your hand, an' in every room of them

was a family, some with five or six children; still the men were most of them at their suppers, an', dear knows, there was hardly one but gave us less or more, though we could scarce bring ourselves to ask them for anything. Sometimes either the wife or the husband would grumble an' say they were poor enough themselves, but the other would put in with 'whisht, now, you miserly crature, we can give a little, an' we will, too, plase the Lord—every little helps—' 'If we don't give,' another would come out with, 'how can we expect to get?' There we were these two mortal hours, from garret to cellar, an' from cellar to garret, except just now an' then that we'd happen on some dealer or store-keeper that lived on a level with the street."

"I don't know how you had the heart to ask charity from such poor creatures," said Con, in a low, hesitating voice; "I think I couldn't do it," and he dashed away a trickling tear with the back of his hand.

"Well, sure enough, we went into five or six places where we *didn't* ask anything, only just made the best of our way out again, and there was one room, away up at the top of a great empty barrack of a house where we found a poor sick girl lyin' on straw on the bare floor, an' not a crature to mind her only her father who had just got in with a loaf of bread that he had been out for. There was two or three little weeny bits of children, the eldest of them not as big as Patsy there, an' to see them

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poor things gatherin' round the father when they
saw the bread, an' houldin' up their little blue cold
hands,—well! well!" said Paul, trying to cough
down his emotion, "it was a sorrowful sight, sure
enough, an' so myself an' Andy gave a quarter each
to the poor heart-broken father, an' made the best
of our way down the four flights of stairs that we
had climbed up. As ill-luck would have it, poor
Andy missed his foot in the dark on one of the
lower flights, an' fell down half the stairs. It was
just as much as he could do to come down here
after, an' only for that we'd have gone farther."

Andy was now besieged with anxious inquiries
touching the amount of damage he had sustained,
which was happily of no great consequence.

"I'll never feel it," said he, with a smile, "when
I'm one day in the grave. But how much money do
you think we have?" he added, brightening up as he
glanced his eye over the rows of little piles, each
containing a dollar.

Each one might have easily ascertained the exact
amount, but that would have been too tedious a
mode of satisfying their benevolent curiosity, so they
all asked eagerly "How much is it?"

"Sixty-five dollars!" said Andy, slowly enunci-
ating every syllable; "what do you think of that?
—and the most of it from those very garrets and
cellars and little dark dens that Paul mentioned!"

Winny and Con were loud in expressing their
astonishment, but Mrs. Bergen seemed to take it as

a matter of course. She declared she had often seen larger collections taken up "for no bigger charity than Anty Brady an' her five children." Though she didn't deny but it was very well, considering the hard times that were in it.

Con O'Regan sat listening with a half abstracted air to the remarks of those around him, till Winny, noticing his silence, smilingly said, "a penny for your thought, Con!"

"I was just thinkin', Winny," said her brother starting from his reverie, "how little notion the people at home have of all this. They think if they once get to America that their hardship is all at an end, an' that they'll never know a day's poverty again. What in the world can be the reason that none of those poor unfortunate creatures ever lets their friends at home know the state they're in? I'm sure and certain if they did, there wouldn't be one-tenth of the number comin' to America. They'd be better pleased to starve at home than in a strange country. I can't make out why they don't tell the truth."

"Ah! that's the secret," said Andy, as he busied himself in making up the money in a neat parcel; "now, I tell you what my notion is. Its true enough what you were saying, that most every one comes out here with the expectation of making a fortune, because it's a new country. Well, you see, when they find themselves disappointed, as many of them are, they're ashamed to own it. They think

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it's all right, at least they can bear their hardship the better, as long as it isn't known at home, and that's just the reason why they all keep the secret. For my part, I never did, or never will, encourage any one to come out. When I'm writing home I always describe things just as they are. But what about this money, Paul; will you come with me to-morrow afternoon to give it to the poor woman that owns it?"

"Any time you like," said Paul, "for I'm sure she's badly in need of it. But, after all, now Andy, this temperance is tryin' enough. If it was former times with me, you see, I wouldn't let you out without a drop of something warm."

"And I'm a thousand times better pleased to see things as they are," returned Andy; "if you had a cask of liquor here I wouldn't taste it. Good night to you all." Turning back at the door, he gave Con and Winny a cordial invitation to go and see his "old woman" on the following day, to which they both agreed. Con lingered a moment after Dwyer had left, to ask Paul who he was.

"He seems to be a very decent, sober man," said Con, "an' a well-discoursed man, too."

"Small thanks to him for that, anyhow," replied Paul; "sure wasn't he at school till he was man big. He got larnin' for a priest, poor fellow, but somehow his people weren't able to push him on, or else he began to find out that he had no likin' for it; so he

just married a wife, an' came off here to America soon after."

"And how did he get along here?"

"Poorly enough, Con; poorly enough. He went out and worked on the railroad a while, just long enough to make him heartsick of it, and to leave him a rheumatism that he'll never get the better of the longest day he has to live. At last he was cheated out of twenty or thirty dollars by a rascal of a contractor—an Irishman, too, and from his own county—and that finished all. He took such a disgust again railroads, that he thought he'd never get away soon enough from the business; and neither would he have got into town, dear knows when, if the men hadn't made up a few dollars among themselves to take him and his sick wife and two little children in."

"And what does he do now?"

"Oh! he turned his hand to anything he could get to do for the first couple of years, but last May was a twelvemonth he got in as a storeman with some merchant in one of the main streets. He's a very good sort of a man—noways bigoted, Andy tells me—just such another as your master, Mr. Coulter. Ever since poor Andy manages to keep the wolf from the door—he has seven dollars a week, and, to a sober man like him, that's enough to keep up his family."

"But he can't save anything out of it," observed Winny; "so, if sickness came on him, or any acci-

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"Save, indeed!" cried Paul, with a husky laugh;
"I'd like to know where's the workin' man that can
save money or have anything by him if he has a
young family to support. No, no!—there's not
much chance of that, God help us—we must only
take things as they are, an' not be frettin' about the
time to come."

"By the laws!" said Con, starting from a reverie,
"it's time I wasn't here, anyhow. I'm sure it's every
minute of ten o'clock. Good night to you all!"
Another moment, and he was hurrying on with rapid
steps in the direction of his boarding-house. Late
as it was the streets were still full of people, no
longer propelling themselves with the bustling haste
of business, but leisurely pacing the flagged sidewalks,
generally in parties of two or more, enjoying the se-
rene brightness of the cold winter moon. But Con
O'Regan, contenting himself with a glance at the ra-
diant orb far up in the azure dome of heaven, and
heaving a sigh for "the loved ones at home," con-
tinued his onward way. He had never been out so
late since he had been a lodger of Mrs. Maloney's,
and he well knew that the good woman was most
particular in regard to the hours kept by her board-
ers. The only thing that induced him to slacken his
speed for a moment was an appeal for charity, made
occasionally at the corner of a street, or from the
shelter of a projecting arch, in the familiar accents

of his own beloved land. To these appeals poor Con could never turn a deaf ear. True, he was accustomed to hear sundry complaints, even from those who were disposed to sympathize with the Irish, that they were too ready to take up "the begging trade," and that such a propensity could only be ascribed to downright laziness; but, somehow, Con had a vague idea that there might be some other cause for this widespread evil. "Begging," thought he, "can never be a pleasure to any one—at least at the first—no one will ever *begin* to beg without some necessity, and God help them that has to turn to it in a strange country. I suppose there *is* some of them that stick to it of their own accord after a while, but that's no reason that I'd refuse a copper to any of them when I have it about me, for, who knows, but it would be them that was in the greatest distress that I'd refuse. At any rate, they're most all of them Irish, and there's enough to be hard on them without me, that's their own flesh and blood!"

He was just engaged in some such soliloquy, still hurrying on, when suddenly the tinkling sound of the fire-bell rang out from the nearest engine house, and the entire neighborhood was thrown into commotion. Doors and windows were hastily opened, and heads peered out in all directions. The people in the streets asked each other "where can the fire be?" and for some time no one seemed to know. At length there was a cry of "Coulter, Pines & Co.—it's there the fire is!"

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"The Lord save us!" cried Con, "is it our ware-
house—what's to be done at all, and Mr. Coulter
living so far off—he'll be ruined entirely!" and off
he ran at full speed to see if he could do anything
that would serve Mr. Coulter, for in that moment
of danger and anxiety Con's grateful heart had no
room for other than his benefactor. He had still a
confused hope that the fire might not be in their
premises after all, but on turning the corner of a
street which nearly fronted the warehouse, his hopes
were changed to dread certainty, for the flames
were bursting from the windows on the second
story. Two or three engines were already at work,
and others were heard advancing in various direc-
tions; the cries of the firemen, the ringing of their
respective bells, and the loud vociferations of the
dense crowd around, all conspiring to make the
scene one of wildest confusion, and Con O'Regan
was for a moment stunned by his own consternation
and the terrific noise, momentarily increasing.
Meanwhile the fire continued to increase, notwith-
standing the almost superhuman exertions of the
fire companies, and it was soon found that there
was no chance of saving the building; the hose was
thenceforward chiefly directed towards the adjoin-
ing warehouses on either side of the narrow street,
and the firemen observed with the utmost coolness
that "Coulter, Pims & Co. had no chance." The
ladders were just withdrawn from the windows, and
the building was almost a sheet of flame when the

agitated voice of Mr. Coulter aroused Con from his stupor. The old gentleman had but just arrived, and his quick eye at once perceived that he had nothing to hope.

"I hope you are well insured, Mr. Coulter?" said a gentleman who recognized the senior partner.

"Yes, yes, we're all right there; but there's a large sum of money lying on my desk which I was too late to deposit yesterday—forgot to put in the safe—is there no possibility of reaching my office?" and he walked towards a door which opened directly from the office on a narrow alley. A thrill of joy flushed his pallid face—the door was yet safe, and no appearance of fire in that end of the building. Taking the key from his pocket, he was about to put it in the lock, when some of the firemen dragged him back, crying:

"Are you mad, mister? The floor above that there office—if so be it is an office—is all in flames—it may fall any minute."

"Then all is lost!" said Mr. Coulter, in a voice scarcely articulate.

"Not yet, sir," answered one from behind, and Con O'Regan stood at his master's side; "give me the key, sir, and I'll venture in!"

A loud mocking laugh was heard on every side, and Mr. Coulter hesitated to give the key.

"It would be death to you, Con,—certain death—no—no! let it be as it is! better that than worse!"

"The key, sir, the key!" still persisted Con, and

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he literally forced it from Mr. Coulter's grasp. Then making the sign of the cross on his forehead and breast, he breathed an inward ejaculation to *Mary, the help of Christians*, and dashing aside with giant strength those who would have held him back from what appeared certain destruction, he gained the little private door, the key turned in the lock obedient to his hand, and he stood a moment on the threshold almost suffocated with the smoke which burst forth in a dense volume.

"Blessed Mother!" cried Con; "I'll never be able to see it—now or never help me till I save this money for my good master!" And he resolutely kept his ground at the door, notwithstanding the choking and blinding smoke. A moment and the almost palpable vapor cleared away, at least partially, so that Con could peer into the office, and sure enough on the desk lay a small parcel which he reached with a single bound, and thrusting it into his breast pocket, dashed, or rather threw himself, through the doorway, which he could no longer see, for the smoke rolled out thicker and darker than ever. Just as Con gained the open air, where he would have fallen exhausted to the ground had not Mr. Coulter caught him in his outstretched arms, the floor above the office gave way, and fell with a deafening crash. A wild shout rent the air when it was known that the venturesome Irishman had escaped, for such heroic devotion could not fail to

elicit admiration even from a people who are ever unwilling to see or acknowledge Irish merit.

"He's a d——d fine fellow!" cried one.

"I swear he's a brick!" said another, "though he is a Paddy!"

Leaving the mob to discuss the matter thus at their leisure, as they watched the decline, or rather the extinction of the fire, Mr. Coulter led Con gently out of the crowd to a place of comparative quiet. The brave fellow had not yet recovered himself after his violent exertion both of mind and body; his eyes were red and swollen, and he had still a choking sensation about the throat; his mind, too, was somewhat confused, yet his hand mechanically clutched the precious parcel in the breast-pocket of his round pea-jacket, and his first act on regaining his consciousness was to hand it to Mr. Coulter, inquiring if that was the one he meant.

"It is, Con, the very one," said his employer, in a voice trembling with emotion, while his pallid brow plainly denoted the excruciating anxiety of the last few minutes, "but, indeed, indeed, I was quite willing to let it go, rather than have you endanger your life!"

"I know that well enough, sir," replied Con, "but I wasn't afeard somehow of losin' my life, for God an' the Blessed Virgin were with me, an' I owed you a good turn, sir, this many a day. Thank God, you have the money safe anyhow! I'll be

biddin' you good night now, Mr. Coulter!" he added, as they reached that gentleman's door.

"I would ask you in to take some refreshment, Con," said Mr. Coulter, as he warmly shook his hand, "only that one of my daughters has a fever, which, I fear, is contagious. It would hardly be prudent for you to enter. Con O'Regan, you have rendered me a great service this night at the imminent peril of your life, and if I am spared you shall never want a friend—you shall find that old Sam Coulter is not ungrateful!"

Con replied that he had done nothing but his duty, and bidding his master once more good night, he walked away with a lightsome heart.



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CHAPTER VII.

EARLY next morning there was a violent ringing at Mr. Coulter's door-bell. After a short delay the door was opened by Mrs. Coulter herself, still in her nightcap, and looking as though she had been a watcher through the long hours of night. It was Mr. Pims who stood without, and his anxious inquiry for Mr. Coulter was responded to on the part of the lady by an invitation to walk in and sit down.

"I suppose you have heard of our misfortune, Mr. Pims?" said Mrs. Coulter, in a listless tone.

"Oh! of course—it was just about that I came this morning."

"And you were not afraid to come in?" inquired the lady, in unfeigned surprise.

"Afraid?—why, certainly not!—what have I to fear?"

"Well, you know, some folk *are* dreadfully afraid of typhus fever—however, I am glad to find that you are not of the number. Excuse me a moment—I will apprise Mr. Coulter of your friendly visit. We have no help just now, as you may perceive, for neither of my girls could be induced to remain one

day in the house, after the doctors had decided that poor Rachel had typhus. Then this unlucky fire happening at such a time—what a dreary world it is, Mr. Pims!—happily its tribulations cannot last forever!"

Thus moralizing, she was about to quit the room after opening the shutters, when Mr. Pims started to his feet, or rather recovered the possession of those members before his hinder end had touched the chair. In two steps he reached the door leading to the hall.

"Did I understand you right, Mrs. Coulter?" he asked, in a loud, excited voice—"is there typhus fever in the house?"

"The doctors say so," replied Mrs. Coulter, turning round in some surprise; "I thought you said you knew."

"Oh! I meant the fire—good morning, Mrs. Coulter!—don't trouble yourself to go up stairs—I can see Mr. Coulter at another time—good morning!" and fearful of being delayed by further interrogation, he hastily made his retreat.

Mrs. Coulter, musing on the selfishness of the world, and heaving a sigh for the promised millenium of universal charity, was passing, as it were, mechanically through the folding doors into the back-parlor, when she was electrified by the apparition of her husband standing right in the doorway. He was evidently chuckling over some humorous

thought, and greeted his grave helpmate with a nod and a smile.

"So you've frightened him off," said he; "if you had laid a plan to get rid of him this morning, Prudence, you couldn't have succeeded better. Being a spiritual brother of yours, my dear I suppose you counted on him in this emergency."

"Me count on him, Mr. Coulter? I did no such thing. I hope I can make allowance for human frailty, though I confess I did not expect to find Mr. Pims quite so selfish."

"Selfish, Prudence!" repeated her husband; "why, how can *you* talk of selfishness in such a case? You who but a few weeks since sent a faithful servant to an hospital as fast as you could get her out of the house, and all for fear of a certain infectious disease from which the poor girl was as free as you yourself were. For shame, Mrs. Coulter! don't reflect on poor Pims for a failing to which we are all prone—the godly as well as the ungodly. But how is poor Rachel this morning? I was in to see her as I passed, but she seems in a kind of slumber. Hannah was sitting by her, and she looks as though she were hardly able to hold up her head, poor thing."

"No more she is, Samuel. I fear she will be the next struck down, though indeed I feel very poorly myself," and she placed her hand on her high narrow forehead.

"But what about Rachel—do you think she is any better?"

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"Not much—if any!" replied the fond mother;
"dear child, what is to become of her should I sink
under this load of trouble and fatigue? Doctor
Richards promised to send a sick-nurse last evening,
but you see there has none come, and here am I try-
ing to do all myself! What an ungrateful hussy that
Leah was to leave me at such a time!—bad as the
Irish are, Winny would scarce have acted so, at least
she could not have acted worse. That was not what
I expected from a respectable, God-fearing girl like
Leah!"

"Oh! of course not, my dear! but you see it's just
as I told you before—typhus fever has no attractions
even for the elect—your religious people are always
praying for 'kingdom come,' but they never want
it near at hand. If they were sure of going to
heaven right off in a hand-basket they would rather
stay here and pray for it. By Jove! they would so!
—never expect one of them, then, to face typhus fever
or any other fever that might send them across the
bourne into the other world. But get me a cup of
coffee, Prudence, as soon as you can, and I'll sally
out in quest of a nurse. Unfortunately I have no
business to attend to to-day, except to pay some bills
which I may thank Con O'Regan for being able to
do."

"Why, what *do* you mean?" cried the anxious
wife, stopping short in her quick march towards the
kitchen where Hannah had made a fire some time be-

fore; "what has Con O'Regan to do with your bills?"

"He has everything to do with them on the present occasion," was the calm reply, and then the warm-hearted old gentleman proceeded to give his wife a brief account of Con's generous devotion on the previous night. Mrs. Coulter listened with a look of blank astonishment, and when she had heard all, she heaved a heavy sigh.

"Well, Prudence!" said her husband, "what do you think of Con, now?—I think I shall have a knock-down argument for the future when fighting the battles of the Irish!—ha! ha! ha! let me catch Pims or Wood coming out with their little narrow prejudices, and, by my word! they shall hear it in both ears!"

"He must be a smart fellow that O'Regan!" was Mrs. Coulter's comment, as she left the room on culinary purpose bent.

"He must be a smart fellow that O'Regan!" repeated the husband, mimicking the peculiar tone and accent of his wife. "Ah! you're a precious set of heartless hypocrites, you canting saints! not a particle of generous feeling in your icy breasts! Heaven help the warm-hearted, impulsive, enthusiastic race who will persist in toiling for such a people—a people so obstinately prejudiced against them, so diametrically opposed to them in every characteristic feature. But I, at least, will do them justice—ay! and what is more, I will bring Madam

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Whilst his breakfast was in preparation, the affec-
tionate old man ascended to the sick room of his
daughter, whom he found still in the same feverish
slumber, with her cheeks like two damask roses,
her eyes half open, and her breathing short and
irregular. Making up the small hand which lay
outside the bedclothes, he found it dry and burning,
and his heart sank within him. Turning to Han-
nah, who had been watching him with scrutinizing
eyes, he shook his head and murmured:

"Your sister is very low, Hannah!—very low,
indeed!—but this sleep may do her good." His
heart was full as he glanced again at the unconscious
sleeper, then whispering to Hannah to take good
care of her sister and that he would find some one
to relieve her, he hastened to place the door be-
tween him and an object that harrowed his very
soul.

"Now if Con should venture in after all," was
Mr. Coulter's soliloquy, as he tramped heavily down
the stairs, and when he heard a modest, hesitating
ring at the door, just as he had seated himself at
the table, he said exultingly to his wife, when return-
ing from the door she announced Con:

"There now, Prudence, you see Con O'Regan
comes in spite of the fever—I knew he would.
Con," he called out, "won't you come inside?"

"No, sir, thank you, I'd rather stay here," re-

plied Con, from the hall. "I just called, Mr. Coulter, to see how the young lady is this mornin', an' to know if you'd have anything for me to do—but I'm in no hurry, sir, I'll wait as long as you like."

"Have you got your breakfast, Con?" was the next question.

"Oh, yis, sir, I got my breakfast an hour ago."

"Very well, Con, I'll be out with you as soon as I take a cup of coffee."

Mrs. Coulter hastily swallowed a few mouthfuls of the grateful beverage, maintaining the while a dignified silence, and muttering something about Rachel, she left the room, reminding her husband to "be sure and see after the nurse."

"And that same is no trifling task," said Mr. Coulter; "but something must be done, as this good doctor of ours seems to take the thing so coolly."

"Now, Con," said Mr. Coulter, as he took his hat from the stand in the hall, "I want you to bring me to the house where Winny boards."

Con looked surprised, but he answered promptly, "An' to be sure, I will, sir, though indeed it's not a place for the likes of you—it's down in a cellar, sir, in Hope street here beyond."

"That is of no consequence," said Mr. Coulter. "I wish to see Winny, so just go ahead, will you?"

Con said no more, and the pair walked on in silence, Con always managing to keep a few feet ahead of his employer, deeming it disrespectful to walk by his

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side. After winding through several streets of that much intricate and mazy city, Con turned into Hope street, which was once inhabited by the upper classes, until the Irish having obtained a settlement there, they were, as is usual in New England cities, speedily left to themselves. It has gradually become a sort of Irish colony, in the heart of the Puritan city. Its inhabitants are principally, indeed almost exclusively, of the humbler classes, most of whom are dependent on their daily labor for the means of living. The street is literally swarming with inhabitants, many of the houses being very large, and all crowded from garret to cellar.

As Mr. Coulter gazed on the troops of little ragged children sporting at every door, in the happy carelessness of their age, and watched their fresh rosy faces, and the precocious intelligence of their shy, startled glances, his kind heart was touched to its very core. "Merciful Heaven!" said he, gaining Cou's side, by a double step or two, "what a population there is here—a population fit for anything! here they are, living by hundreds in squalid poverty, scarce knowing to-day how they may live to-morrow! what *can* infatuate them so?"

"What can they do, sir?" said Con, respectfully.

"Do! why let them go out and scatter over the country—there are millions of broad acres within the territory of this Republic, awaiting the woodman's axe and the tiller's spade—lands which could be had for a very small purchase. Now your people are

mostly given to agricultural pursuits at home, and it is strange that they do not make an effort to get farms here."

Con listened with intense interest, and caught eagerly at Mr. Coulter's proposition concerning the waste lands. "Why, sir," said he, "these are the lands, I suppose, that we used to hear so much about at home. Where are they, if you please, sir?—I thought all the country round here was settled, and the land taken up long ago."

"So it is, Con," said Mr. Coulter, smiling; "but the lands I mean are away out West in some of the new States, such as Wisconsin, Iowa and others. In fact, there are vast tracts of country still unoccupied in all the Western States.* But the trouble is," he added, musingly, "how could those poor people get there, or, being there, how could they live till such times as they had cleared enough of land to raise crops? If they had only the means of living for one year! the thing I fear is hopeless!" he concluded, with a heavy sigh.

Here Con stopped in front of a four-story house which might once have been the handsome residence of some wealthy merchant. The cellar into which Con led his employer had been lately whitewashed,

*The reader must remember that this refers to a period ten years back. Unfortunately the same could not be said now. The Western States will very soon be as thickly settled as any in the Union.

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ness and comfort.

At the moment of Mr. Coulter's arrival, Winny was making up the beds while Mrs. Bergen sat by the stove dressing the baby, now, like its mother, much fresher and fairer than when we first saw them. A general commotion followed the announcement of the children that "there was a gentleman comin' down the steps with Con O'Regan," and Winny came forward just in time to receive Mr. Coulter with a curtsy and a smile, her face all in a glow with pleasure and surprise. But Mr. Coulter refused to go further than the door, saying, with characteristic bluntness:

"I suppose you haven't heard of Rachel's illness?"

"Indeed, I did hear of it, sir," replied Winny; "Con told me last night, an' heart sorry I was to hear it, too. Is there any change for the better this mornin'?"

"Not the least sign of change, Winny," said Mr. Coulter, sadly, "and I do not expect any for some time. Winny," he added, abruptly after a short pause, "are *you* afraid of fever?"

Winny's pale cheek grew a shade paler, and her voice trembled perceptibly as she replied: "Well! sir, I can't say but what I am—there's no use in sayin' what's not true—hem!" clearing her throat vigorously, "but if it was God's will for me to be in the way of it, I hope He'd give me strength to do my duty."

"Winny," said Mr. Coulter, "I came here to ask a great favor of you—will you come and take care of Rachel till she gets better—or—," his voice faltered, but Winny came to his relief:

"I'll go, Mr. Coulter—I will, sir, if I was sure of takin' the fever myself. Miss Rachel shan't want some one to mind her while I'm able to do it." As she spoke, her cheek had an unnatural glow, and her eyes flashed with unwonted brightness. Winny was making a desperate effort, for, in her heart, she had the full measure of terror wherewith the Irish peasantry regard typhus—or "the fever," as they emphatically call it. But still, within the deep recesses of that generous heart, there was a sensible emotion of joy and gratitude that she was at last enabled to show her kind old master how deeply she felt his goodness to herself and her brother. She glanced at Con, whose ruddy cheek had become almost as bloodless as her own during the foregoing brief colloquy. His eyes were full of tears, and he stood leaning against the door-post, with a countenance expressive of strong inward emotion. Mrs. Bergen, in her turn, called out, in a raised and excited tone:

"Why, the Lord bless me, Winny, sure *you* can't take upon you to mind the young lady, an' you only jist gettin' up yourself, as a body may say, from a sick bed? Depend upon it, Winny, you'd be knocked down yourself before one week went over your head. Hut, tut, girl, don't be makin' a fool of yourself, un-

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on my knee!"

"What do you say, Con?" inquired Mr. Coulter,
suddenly turning to Con, whose silence struck him
as remarkable. "You see I didn't tell you what I
wanted with Winny—I knew you would hear it
soon enough. Do you think it advisable for Winny
to undertake this office?"

"Well! I don't know, sir," said Con, slowly, with
his eyes still fixed on his sister's face,—“if there
could be any one else got, I'm afraid she's hardly
strong enough—but then if there's no one else to do
it, why, of course, I'm not the man to advise her
again it. We owe you a debt of gratitude, Mr.
Coulter, and with God's help, it must be paid.”
Still he turned away, and took out his red handker-
chief.

Mr. Coulter said not a word, but he took Winny's
hand and then Con's in both his, and pressed them
with almost convulsive energy, while the tears fell
unheeded from his eyes.

Making a sign to Mrs. Bergen, who was about to
put in another remonstrance, Winny told Mr. Coul-
ter that she would go to his house just as soon as
she could get her little things in readiness, with
which assurance he was perfectly satisfied, and went
away, followed by Con, who hastily shook hands
with Winny, and bade her farewell in a tone of
touching sadness, as though he feared he was resign-
ing her to almost certain death. Winny endeavored

to re-assure him with the whispered words: "God is good, Con—He never failed us in our need, an' neither will He now!"

"It's true for you, Winny, an' it's weak faith that's in me or I'd have thought of that before." And so saying Con O'Regan bounded up the steps after his employer with a lighter heart and a more hopeful spirit. Never was faith more strong, never was piety more cheerful than in the soul of the genuine child of Erin as yet uncontaminated by the pestilential breath of worldly skepticism inhaled in foreign climes. Nurtured in the religious atmosphere of an eminently Christian land, faith is from the beginning the sensible basis of all their actions—by its light they are wont to steer their course, by its strength they are raised above the storms of fate, and by its sweetness they are consoled in the unexampled misery which is too often their lot.

No sooner had Con disappeared in the wake of his employer than Winny was assailed by a shower of friendly abuse from Mrs. Bergen, while the children set up a chorus of lamentation at the prospect of losing Winny. The former, and more formidable assailant Winny silenced with an appeal to Mrs. Bergen's own feelings.

"Now, Mrs. Bergen, dear, what makes you talk that way?—you know as well as I do that if you were in my place, free to go where you like—without chick or child, or one in the world," here her voice faltered, as the remembrance of her recent loss

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just Con, that's well able to do for himself, an' with
such a load of obligation on you as I have—you know
right well that you'd go yourself with a heart an' a
half. An' so will I, please God, if I were to lose my
life for it. Maybe I'd never die in a better time,
anyhow."

Mrs. Bergen was at last obliged to give in, and
the children's clamorous wailing was speedily and
effectually stopped by the promise of "lots of candy"
when Winny came again, "an' God knows when
that'll be," she added in an under tone, as she hastily
made a bundle of the few things she intended taking
with her.

About half an hour after, Winny O'Regan bade
farewell to her faithful friend, who could not restrain
her tears as she held up the baby for her to kiss.
The other children from Jane down to little Jim all
gathered round her, each claiming a special "good-
bye," and Winny had no small trouble in extricating
herself from their affectionate grasp as they hung
around her. On reaching the door she turned and
said once more; "Good bye, Mrs. Bergen, give my
best respects to Paul, and tell him if I live I'll not
forget either of you. If I die—why I'll remember
you in heaven—when I get there. Pray for me Mrs.
Bergen, an' make the children pray, too."

Mrs. Bergen would have answered with a fervent
promise, but Winny was already gone. She repaired
at once to Mr. Coulter's. Having rung the bell with

an unsteady hand, she waited patiently for a few minutes, not venturing to ring a second time, when the door was opened by Mrs. Coulter, who, on seeing her there with her bundle in her hand, manifested some surprise.

"Why, Winny, is it possible that you are coming back?—I really thought you were still in the hospital. Do come in!"

Winny entered accordingly, saying as she did so: "No, ma'am, it's three weeks to-day since I left the hospital."

"Why, do tell!—I'm surprised that Mr. Coulter never told me." It was not at all surprising, however, for the good lady had never once asked for Winny within the time specified.

"And so you are come to stay." Winny answered in the affirmative.

"Well! I must say it is rather fortunate that you came just now, for I have no help at present—Leah is gone some days ago, and dear Rachel is very sick indeed. Just go up to your own room and put away your things—I hope you have washed them before you came."

Winny colored deeply and said: "I'd do that for my own sake, Mrs. Coulter. I'm sure you never found me with my clothes dirty."

"Oh! not at all, Winny—of course I do not mean that. But you know there are some of those low Irish lodging-houses anything but clean."

Winny broke in rather abruptly and with an un-

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ma'am, beggin' your pardon—an' though it was in a
cellar in Hope street I was, there was no dirt in it
to harm any one's clothes."

"Oh! I dare say not!" said Mrs. Coulter, with an
equivocal smile; "at all events, go up stairs and take
off your things. I suppose you have had your break-
fast."

Winny answered in the affirmative and then slowly
ascended the stairs.



CHAPTER VIII.

LEAVING Winny to the assiduous and conscientious discharge of her self-imposed task, sustained in her perilous position by the grace of God, and her own strong sense of gratitude, let us penetrate once again into the comfortless dwellings of Hope street. It was a small, dingy room, on the fourth story of a house which was once a private mansion, the abode of wealth and taste, but now "fallen from its high estate," and sheltering as many families as it contained rooms—the spacious apartments of former days having been long since divided and subdivided to suit the scanty means of the present class of occupants. The room was scantily furnished, having but one poor, crazy-looking bedstead, covered over with a clean, but faded patchwork quilt, some three or four chairs, one of which was fearfully rickety, and a good-sized table of unpainted deal. There were also a couple of wooden stools, or *crickets*, as they are called in the place, and on one of these sat a young woman, whose vacant look, ever and anon raised towards the light burning on the table, told a sad tale of visual darkness. She was neatly, though

poorly clad, and was busily employed knitting a woollen stocking, her long, thin fingers plying the needles with surprising agility, acquired, doubtless, by long habit. She could not be more than twenty-one or two, though the sombre melancholy arising from her solitary and helpless state, cast a gloom, as of many additional years, on her otherwise pretty face. Near her lay a young infant in a cradle, which she kept rocking with her foot, trolling ever in an under tone a wild, mournful air. On the floor by her side sat a little gentle-looking girl of four or five years old, while a bold, strong boy some few years older, was whetting a piece of stick in a corner behind the stove. At a first glance one might suppose that the young woman was the mother of the children, but such was not the case, for when she occasionally suspended her ditty in order to call them to order, they answered her by the name of Peggy. But it was not often that she spoke, for her soul seemed oppressed by some heavy sorrow, and she sat, apparently wrapped up in her gloomy imaginings, though there was noise enough in the room to distract any mind less collected than her own. At the table, within four or five feet of where she sat, were seated some three or four men, with a capacious black bottle before them, from which they occasionally replenished their glasses. As yet there was none of the party actually intoxicated, although they were all what is called "half-seas over." In their dress, and they were all dressed pretty nearly

alike, the men were a singular compound of the laborer and the seaman, with a mixture, too, of the peculiar characteristics of each class in their speech and manners. More or less prominent in each was the frank, good-natured bearing of the sailor, with much of his swart and sun-browned color. One of them was an old acquaintance, Tom Derragh, who, with his fellow prisoner, Barney Brady—his host on the present occasion—had got out of jail some few weeks before, their term of imprisonment being at last ended. Their two companions were 'longshoremen—or ship-porters like themselves, men after their own hearts, who ever acted on the principle of chasing "dull care away," who made it a rule, like the grasshopper in the fable, to sing and be merry while they might, leaving the morrow to shift for itself. Yet these were men who had from nature both energy and activity to carry out useful and laudable purposes—they were gifted with the full measure of personal strength, and had courage to brave all earthly ills—but, alas! they were cursed with the improvident, careless spirit, which has been the ruin of myriads of their race, numbers of whom might have gained an honored place in society, and bequeathed ample fortunes to their children, were it not for that fatal blight. True it is that, like the vast majority of their countrymen, these gay, rollicking 'longshoremen were—

"More fit to practice than oo plan,"

compound of the lamixture, too, of the class in their speech ominent in each was g of the sailor, with vned color. One of Tom Derragh, who, y Brady—his host on out of jail some few imprisonment being at ions were 'longehore-elves, men after their the principle of chas- de it a rule, like the g and be merry while, w to shift for itself. d from nature both t useful and laudable h the full measure of courage to brave all vere cursed with the ich has been the ruin bers of whom might e in society, and be- children, were it not is that, like the vast these gay, rollicking

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else they would long before have discovered that they were on the wrong track, and must needs "tack about" if they would have anything to support them in their declining years, or to bequeath to their families after them, for, unfortunately, they were all husbands and fathers, with the exception of Tom Derragh. But left to their own guidance, they followed their own natural and acquired instincts, and followed them to their ruin, as many have done before, and, in all probability, many will again.

They had been talking in a reckless, mocking way of Brady's and Derragh's recent imprisonment. That naturally led to Phil McDermot, who was generally voted a "low lived rascal," for the fact of his refusing to contribute towards the expenses of Peter Bergen's funeral had been one of the first communicated to Tom and Barney on their leaving the jail.

"By japers!" cried Tom Derragh, "it will be ten times as much out of his pocket before I'm a year older. If it wasn't for him and his dance Barney and myself wouldn't have got into limbo as we did, but what would we care—no by—," swearing a strange and novel oath too fearful to be repeated—"I wouldn't care a chaw of tobacco, if the fellow was what he ought to be—if he had the least mite of a heart, the ungrateful blubber!"

The sentiment was echoed all round, but the general indignation wherewith McDermot was justly regarded was unhappily extended in a measure, at

least, to Paul Bergen, who had forfeited the sympathy of his former associates by his recent adoption of sober habits.

"He's not the stuff after all," said Barney Brady, draining his glass, an example which the others were not slow to imitate; "if he was, he wouldn't be led by the nose as he is. I took him to be a first-rate fellow, an' never expected to see him said and led by his wife——"

"I wish to God there was more than Paul Bergen said and led by their wives—many a broken heart it would save, and many a poor family that's in the height of misery might then be happy and comfortable! If Paul Bergen hadn't left off drinkin' when he did, he wouldn't have a wife now to be advised by. Shame on you, Barney Brady! is it you that talks that way of Paul Bergen, because he took himself up in time from his evil ways, and took the heavy warnin' that God gave him! Yourself made a promise only a week ago that you'd do as he did, and shun liquor altogether—is this the way you're keepin' it?"

It was the blind girl who spoke, and her words, sharp and bitter for her who was naturally quiet and reserved, made a visible impression on her rough but kindly hearers. None of them spoke for a moment, but sat looking on each other in blank surprise.

"As for 'Tom Derragh,'" said Peggy, and there was a slight tremor in her voice, "there's no use talkin' to him. I suppose we may give him up altogether."

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Tom was quite unmanned by this most unlooked-for attack. His color came and went, he pushed the glass from before him, and narrowly escaped upsetting the late "centre of all hearts"—the black bottle. Then drawing his chair hastily from the table, he said, after some ineffectual attempts to speak:

"Why, Peggy Bawn, you're comin' out strong, mavourneen!—why didn't you say all this before, an' not be keeping it all locked up in that queer little heart of yours? Now, you know well enough that I'm not half so bad as you'd make it appear. Come now, Peggy, tell the truth!"

"I know," said Peggy, after a short pause, "that you're not half so bad as yourself makes it appear; but for all that, you can't deny that you're one of the foolishhest *gomers* in this city. If you weren't, it isn't sittin' there boozin' and drinkin' you'd be, and you only just gettin' out of a jail. If you go on a little longer in the way you're doin', I'm afeard, if God hasn't said it, you'll come to worse than that. But, sure, after all, there's some of them far worse than you are, because they have others dependin' on them, which you have not."

"Well, if I haven't I ought!" said Tom, with deep feeling, "and it's your own self knows that well, my poor girl! But there's a good time comin', Peggy dear—it's never so dark, you know, as when it's near day."

"Talk's cheap, Tom," was Peggy's curt reply, as

she resumed her knitting with increased assiduity as though to make up for lost time.

"I know what you mean, Peggy," said Tom, now thoroughly sobered, "but to let you see that I can act as well as talk, I'll not taste another drop this night. Will that please you?"

"Oh! then, indeed, it's not hard to please *me*," said Peggy, in her quietest manner. "Whatsomever pleases God is sure to please *me*." This was said in a tone of good reserve, which showed pretty clearly that Peggy desired no farther conversation at that time, and her wish was evidently law both to Tom and Barney. The latter was Peggy's brother-in-law, being the husband of her only sister, with whom she had come to America some five or six years before. Her connection with Tom, and the powerful influence which she seemed to exercise over him, notwithstanding her pitiable helplessness, was a mystery to most of their acquaintance, and many a biting sarcasm it gave rise to, at Tom's expense. These unkind remarks, however, were generally made in his absence, for there were few of his associates, reckless as they were, who cared to arouse his ire, and it was fully understood by all who knew him intimately, that if he was sensitive on any one point it was on Peggy Daly's misfortune, and so great was his respect for her that none might dare to mention her with levity in his presence. In fact, Peggy's virtues were such as to command respect from all who knew her, and inasmuch as she had a

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firmer and more vigorous mind than her sister Anty
so her opinion had more weight with Barney than
that of his wife, who was apt, at times, to let her
temper get the better of her reason.

When the brief colloquy between Tom and Peggy
was brought to a close, Barney cleared his throat
once or twice, and said, with a significant glance at
his companions beyond the table:

"Blood alive, Peggy, sure you wouldn't be so
hard on us all out? Now, you know well enough
I didn't taste a drop good or bad since last week—
exceptin' the glass a day that I left myself liberty
to take—an' sure isn't it Ned and Jack here that
wanted to trate Tom and myself—how could either
of us get over takin' a little then?"

"A little!" repeated Peggy, with scornful em-
phasis. "If you could any of you stop with a little,
sorry I'd be to say, one word to you about it, but
you know you *never* stop at a little. Now just let
me alone, all of you, for it doesn't become a poor
dark crature like me to be talkin' up this-a-way to
men that ought to know their own affairs better
than me."

"There now," said Tom, in an under tone, "you
see there's no reasonin' cases with *her*. Take my
advice and let her alone."

"I b'lieve you're right," said Barney, in the same
tone, and he handed over the bottle to Ned and
Jack, making a sign for them to fill their glasses.
As for himself he followed Tom's example, not.

withstanding the pressing invitation of the others, made partly by signs and partly by whispers. Seeing how matters stood, they very soon took up their hats and went away, Ned telling Barney when he accompanied them to the stair-head, "that 'ere girl's a witch, take my word for it."

"She has bewitched Tom, at any rate," responded Jack. Barney laughed, but said nothing, for his wife just then appeared on the landing-place below, and he hastily retreated into the room, glad to get quit of the two before Anty got back. Little did he suspect that she had been in search of Andy Dwyer, for whom she knew he had a high respect, hoping that his presence would have the effect of "scattering the school," as she said to herself, "and a hopeful school it is—my heavy curse on the day unlucky Barney Brady got in with such company!"

"Why, what's in the wind now?" said Anty, throwing the door open, and casting a hurried glance around, the scowl still on her brow, but a smile on her thin lips; "I met two of the black sheep on the stairs abroad—is the bottle empty, Barney, or what's come atwixt you?"

Rushing to the table she seized the bottle and held it up between her and the light, but to her great surprise it was still half full. Then she turned and took a leisurely survey of Barney and Tom, but neither of them was "the worse for liquor."

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another glance at the bottle; "I think it's dramis'
I am, sure enough."

Barney only laughed, and evidently enjoyed his
wife's amazement, but Tom hastened to reply, and
said it was all along of Peggy, "for all she sits
there knittin' her stockin' as mute as a mouse."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Anty, as she proceeded to
take off her cloak and bonnet, which she hung on
a pin behind the door, contiguous to an old tarpau-
lin hat of Barney's. "Ha! ha! Peggy, honey, it's
yourself can do it when you like. There's nothing
too hot or too heavy for you."

"Never mind them, Anty," said Peggy, raising
her eyes in the direction of her sister's voice, with
a smile of matchless humor playing around her small
mouth; "they're only making game of you—you
know what a pair of lads they are. Did you bring
me that yarn I wanted?"

This was only an excuse to hide the real object
of her sister's absence, but Anty took the hint, and
replied that Irwin's store was closed, so she didn't
go any farther as it was gettin' late.

"Anty," said Peggy, "I have good news for you.
Tom Derragh is goin' to lave off drinkin' and take
himself up, and as for Barney here he's going to
stick to his promise like a man."

Anty was by this time in high good humor, and
extended her hand to Tom with a gracious smile, say-
ing, "Give me your hand, Tom!—there's hope for
you yet. Stick to that notion, and you'll soon show

them what you can do. There's time enough yet to do well."

"I mean to try, Mrs. Brady," said Tom, his eyes still fixed on Peggy's sightless, yet animated countenance, with a look of mingled sorrow and admiration, very different from the usually stolid expression of his features.

"Say with God's help," put in Peggy, softly.

"Where's the use of saying that?" said Tom, bluntly; "if I can I will, that's all!"

Peggy shook her head and sighed. Hardly another word did she speak during the evening, except when returning Tom's good night. Even then she barely said what was necessary, nothing more.

"She thinks now that I can't keep my word," said Tom to himself, with some bitterness, as he descended the long dark staircase, which seemed to him of interminable length, "but I'll let her see I can. And after all she takes too much on her—she talks to me all as one as if I were a child—how she does catechise one, and put words in a fellow's mouth that he never meant to say. She can just wind people round her finger—it's well we're not tied to her," he added; "and yet," said a voice from his inmost heart—"it isn't my fault that I am not—blind and all as she is now, there's nobody like Peggy—poor Peggy!" and a heavy sigh burst from his heart as he stepped forth at last into the cold, calm moon-

light. He looked up for a moment at the starry heavens and the beautiful queen of night

"As she floated above,
In her robe of light,"

and he thought of the days long, long past, when he was young, and gay, and happy, because innocent and free from the corrupting influence of bad company. He heard again his father's admonitory words of wisdom, his mother's sweet song as she turned her wheel by the winter's fire on the well-swept hearth—thence his busy memory wandered to

"The cliff-bound inch, the chapel in the glen,
Where oft with bare and reverent locks *he* stood
To hear th' eternal truths."

These old home pictures were before him in all their beautiful simplicity, and under the benign spell of Peggy's prudent counsel, he was softened for the moment to a sense of his unworthiness, and could easily have been brought to say: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" but, alas! there was no one near to foster the rising sentiment into a salutary feeling of remorse, and the whole current of his thoughts was instantly changed by the voice of a so-called friend, a boarder in the same house, who happened to pass at the moment. Not sorry to get rid of his gloomy cogitations, Tom willingly consented to accompany his friend to a raffle in the neighborhood, and off they went together, on fun, rather than charity intent.

Tom's good resolutions vanished like the morning mist before the exciting influences surrounding him on every side at the raffle. It had been originally got up for the benefit of a poor widow whose large family were in urgent need of some immediate assistance. Two of her boys had fallen into the hands of the philanthropical authorities of that most charitable city, and it cost the poor mother some weeks of constant application and assiduous exertion before they were restored to her Popish arms. The Widow Mulligan was a hard-working, industrious woman, ekeing out a subsistence for herself and her family by washing and charring. She was a fervent, conscientious Catholic, and would willingly see her children in their coffins, as she said herself, rather than have them brought up Protestants. These sentiments, together with her well-known honesty and industry, naturally excited a strong sympathy in her favor, and soon after her honorable victory over the "Friends and Fathers" of the city, a small clock was purchased by a few generous friends for the purpose of having it raffled for the benefit of Widow Mulligan. Ever ardent and impulsive, and warmly susceptible of right feeling, the Irish seldom pause to think of the fitness of the course which their fervid sympathy dictates. There was a large number of people, both male and female, at this raffle, on the evening appointed for the great event. They assembled even before the hour specified, at a tavern, not far distant from Mrs. Mulligan's dwell

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ing, the landlord of said tavern having *kindly* offered the use of his largest room for the occasion. It is needless to say that the raffle put nearly as much money into his pocket as it did into that of Mrs. Mulligan, a dance being got up, as usual, after the raffle, and all the world knows that dancing makes people mighty thirsty. A handsome sum was realized, it is true, for the worthy widow, but many a pocket was emptied in the course of the evening, or rather *night*, and many a good resolution disappeared—as in the case of Tom Derragh—disappeared, perhaps, for ever. The charity that was done might have been done in another way, just as effectual, without being made the occasion of unnecessary expenditure, and an incalculable amount of sin and misery.

As for Tom Derragh, when he once got "on the spree," there was no knowing where or when his "spree" was to end. Work of any kind was out of the question, as long as money or credit lasted, and it was only when both were utterly exhausted that Tom brushed himself up and went in quest of something to do. During these fits of dissipation, Tom always took good care to keep as far as possible from Barney Brady's dwelling, although it sometimes happened that Barney himself was one of his companions in these rambles, or "roving commissions," as they facetiously styled them. On the present occasion, however, Barney was not of the party and when Tom ventured to present himself in the

fourth-story chamber at the farther end of Hope street, a day or two after he had returned to his work, he found Barney listening attentively to a certain account of "Wonderful Shipwrecks," read by no less a person than Andy Dwyer. Tom entered with a sheepish, lounging air, as though conscious of deserving no warm reception, and though Barney nodded with his wonted kindness, "the woman-kind" (as Monkbarns would say) hardly condescended to notice him. Anty bade him, indeed, a cold "good evening," then went on with her work as though he were not in the room, while Peggy, though she started on hearing her sister salute him by name, spoke not a single word. Andy Dwyer raised his head a moment from the book, with a formal "How are you, Thomas?" for it was one of Andy's peculiarities never to address any one by the ordinary abbreviation of his or her name, always giving it as his opinion that by what name soever they were baptized, by that name they should invariably be called. "If we have a saint's name," would Andy say, "it's a burning shame to disrespect it with a nickname." Many an attempt had he made to induce his acquaintances to correct their pronunciation of his own name, but somehow they seemed to have a perverse satisfaction in calling him *Andy*, and, after some years' constant application, he had resigned himself to his fate, and suffered the Apostolic name of Andrew to lie over, "leaving it all to their

own ignorance—if they knew any better they wouldn't do it."

Having timidly slid himself into a seat, Tom began his endeavors to break the ice with sundry "sticks of candy" wherewith he had prudently provided himself. These, managed as he well knew how to do, soon gained the unqualified favor of the two children who were quietly placed one on either knee. Still Anty maintained her frowning silence, and Peggy might have passed for a little squatting statue, were it not for the unceasing motion of her fingers as she pursued her endless task. At length Tom, drawing his chair near her, ventured to ask, almost in a whisper, if she had been well ever since he saw her. A flush, most probably of anger, crimsoned Peggy's fair face, as she replied, somewhat snappishly:

"This is no time for talkin'—don't you hear the man readin'?"

Barney smiled, and nodded at his friend, as much as to say: "You're in for it now, my lad!" and Tom, disconcerted and embarrassed, was fain to make a show of listening to Andy, wishing him, at the same time, in Jericho, "himself and his book of shipwracks."

At length Andy closed his book, observing that it must be getting near bed-time, and Tom was right glad to effect his retreat at the same time, notwithstanding Barney's question of "What's your hurry man?"

"Oh! never mind him," said Peggy, speaking for the first time since her sharp rebuke of Tom's ill-manners. "He has a power of business on hands these times. You know he has to count his money over now an' then, an' look after many a thing that *we* don't know of."

"That's the old proverb all over, Peggy," said Tom, sharply—"When a man's down, down with him. I didn't expect such jibes from *you*."

"Do you tell me so? ah! then why, if it's no harm to ask?"

"Good night to you all!" said Tom; "I see there's no use talkin' to some people!" and without waiting for an answer he followed Dwyer down stairs, internally resolving "not to go there again in a hurry."



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CHAPTER IX.

MEANWHILE Winny O'Regan kept faithful watch by the sick bed of Rachel Coulter. After her arrival, the sick-room was well nigh left to herself and her unconscious patient, Mrs. Coulter thinking it wholly unnecessary for either herself or Hannah to enter its dangerous precincts. Pastilles were burned in the room, and aromatic vinegar was sprinkled profusely in the adjoining passage. Disinfecting fluids were placed at doors and stair tops, and every precaution was taken to prevent the contagion from spreading. And all this time, that is to say for nine long nights and as many days, Winny remained in constant attendance on the sick girl, her meals being left for her outside the door of the chamber. Human nature could not have withstood such prolonged and incessant fatigue, especially in the enfeebled state of Winny's health, but Mr. Coulter came to her relief, and took her place by Rachel's bed for some hours every night, so that she was enabled to get some rest on a sofa in the adjoining room. Mrs. Coulter often remonstrated with her husband on this imprudent exposure of himself, for which there was

not, according to her, the slightest necessity. But she spoke to ears that would not hear; for Mr. Coulter had no mind to leave the whole risk and the whole fatigue to one poor, delicate girl, herself only recovering from a tedious illness.

"It was I that asked her to undertake this thing," said he, "and I feel bound to see that she be not overtaken—her present strength is not much, and it would certainly kill her to watch night and day by a bed of contagious disease."

"Well! you are always so soft, Samuel!—now don't *you* suppose that this girl would have taken the nursing in hands if she didn't think she had strength enough to go through with it. And then, I guess you intend to pay her well for her trouble, so I really think she *might* be permitted to discharge the duty for which she is engaged. I do so, Samuel, you needn't look so hard at me—I know these Irish very well indeed, and I tell you they can bear almost anything if they are only paid for it."

Mr. Coulter only answered with a look, and turned away, saying within himself: "If this be the fruit of vital religion, I thank God I have forsworn it long ago. Better a thousand times the natural promptings of man's own heart, than the stern, cold, selfish teachings of what is called religion. Religion indeed!" he contemptuously ejaculated, as he hastily ascended to his daughter's room. "A fig for religion, say I!—one drop of the milk of human kindness is worth a bushel of religion!—give me, for my

creed, the golden rule: Do unto others as you would be done by!"

Such was Mr. Coulter's characteristic soliloquy on the comparative merits of religion and benevolence. Religion was, in his mind, identified with the barren, lifeless forms, the "human inventions," nicknamed *religions*, which he saw around him. He saw them founded on selfishness, veiled in hypocrisy as "a sad-colored garment," preaching universal toleration, but practising universal intolerance of the fiercest and most relentless kind. His heart, naturally warm and susceptible of all kindly emotions, instinctively shrank from such a system of hypocrisy, so harsh and so shallow. It never occurred to him that charity—free, warm, spontaneous charity—is the inseparable adjunct of true religion—that the one cannot exist without or independent of the other, and that religion, *without* charity, would be as fire without flame. Such a conception of religion would have enlisted all his generous sympathies, and most probably have made him a sincere Christian, but unhappily his naturally upright mind was shrouded, as regarded spiritual matters, in the gross darkness which then, as now, enveloped and overshadowed the great mass of his countrymen.

On entering the sick-room, Mr. Coulter was greeted with a burst of fervent gratitude from Winny. "Thanks be to God, sir, Miss Rachel has got a turn for the better—she knew me a little while ago, when she opened her eyes after that long trance she was

In ever since last night when you were here. But, sir dear! don't speak above your breath, for she's in a kind of a doze now—just see how natural she looks, an' how regular an' soft her breathin' is."

Mr. Coulter, stooping over the bed, had the intense satisfaction of finding Winny's statement quite correct. "Well!" said he, "Winny, if she gets over it, I may thank you. Your care an' attention have done more for her than the two doctors could have done."

"Under God, sir, under God," said Winny hastily, fearful of encouraging, even by a momentary silence, what she deemed a criminal detraction from the paramount claims of God. "It was little I did, or could do, if He didn't enable me. Blessed be His holy name!" and she raised her humid eyes to heaven.

"Well! well!" said Mr. Coulter, petulantly, "have it your own way, Winny—still you must allow that we owe you some small share of gratitude."

"Why, then, to be sure, sir, I did what little I could, but that's neither here nor there. How is Con, if you please, sir, or do you know did he get e'er a letter from home?" She had not seen her brother since she took Rachel in charge, though he called every day at the door to make inquiries.

"Oh! he's very well, Winny," replied Mr. Coulter, "only very anxious on your account, as I can see clearly, although he does not choose to say so."

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He has had a letter from his wife, a couple of days ago, and I believe his family are all well."

"Thank God for that same!" ejaculated Winny, in her soft, whispering accents. "It's a comfort to hear that, anyhow. But, hush—hush—there's Miss Rachel stirring. I declare she's wakin' up, sir."

The exquisite joy of that moment amply repaid the fond father for the heart-wearing anxiety of the last few weeks, and as he met the speaking eye of his child and clasped the little attenuated hand which she held out to him, he involuntarily breathed his thanks to God as fervently as Winny herself could have done. Rachel was about to speak, but her father laid his commands on her to be silent, telling her to be a good girl and do whatever Winny told her, and that she would soon be well and "about again." Rachel cast an inquiring glance around the room, and her face expressed disappointment as she uttered the word "Ma?"

"Oh! your ma is down stairs—she'll be up very soon, I dare say. I'll let her know that you wish to see her. Good-bye now, Rachel, and mind what I told you."

The joyful news which Mr. Coulter went all the way to the kitchen to communicate was received by his wife with edifying composure. She was rejoiced, indeed, as what mother would not? at the favorable change which had taken place in her child, but still she shrank from the danger of contracting the terrible malady.

"You know, my dear," said she in her faintest accents, "that I am almost exhausted after the unusually hard work which I have been obliged to do during the last couple of weeks. I would, therefore, be predisposed to catch the infection, and what would become of you all if I were laid up?"

"That is very true, Prudence," said her husband, smiling at the marked emphasis laid on the pronoun I; "on the whole it may be more prudent for you to keep away. Ahem! Prudence is, undoubtedly, a Christian virtue. If Winny O'Regan had been as prudent as you are, my good woman," he muttered, as he ascended the kitchen stairs, "Rachel might be on the other side the great gulf by this time. To the mischief with such Christian virtues if they harden a mother's heart and fill it with icy selfishness!"

With this burst of just indignation Mr. Coulter descended the steps, and was soon lost in the busy crowd hurrying to and fro in the street without. He and his partners were that day to meet the agents of the various insurance companies for the final arrangements of matters concerning the late fire. The character of the firm was so well established that the insurance officers knew not well how to bring forward an objection which must necessarily have involved a charge of fraud, and, moreover, their repeated investigations had elicited nothing that could in the slightest degree justify such a charge, so that they had no alternative but pay the

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amount of their various policies, which they did with
no very good grace, the sums being respectively
larger than it was to their liking to advance.

This grand affair being happily settled, the busi-
ness of the firm was speedily resumed in another
building in the same street. At a preliminary meet-
ing of the partners, previous to the re-opening of
their warehouse, the question of "the hands" was,
of course, brought under discussion.

"Now, who are we to keep, and who to get rid
of?" said Wood. "The present is a good opportu-
nity to make any changes to that effect which we
may think necessary or advantageous."

"If my advice were taken," said Pims, with a
sidelong glance at his senior, "there should be none
of these confounded Irishmen about the premises.
I guess we shall bring a storm about our heads
some of these days by retaining so many of them
in our employment. We shall not be allowed to
go on much longer in defiance of public opinion,
take my word for it. But I suppose," he added,
still more pointedly, "there would be no use in
thinking of sending that O'Regan adrift—he has
laid us under such *pressing* obligations."

Wood evidently enjoyed this homethrust at Coul-
ter, but the latter replied very coolly in his blunt
way, "Never mind O'Regan; I don't intend to
employ him any more in the concern. So leave *him*
out of your calculations."

Never was astonishment more plainly depicted

on "the human face divine" than it was at that moment on the respective visages of the junior partners. With that, too, there was an unmistakeable mixture of hope—hope that "the favorite," as they usually styled Con, had disoblged Mr. Coulter in some way that had turned his honest heart against him.

"Why, how is that?" said Wood; "have you, then, been deceived in him?"

"What has he done?" cried Pims, wholly unable to conceal his satisfaction. "I thought he was the non-such of porters!"

Mr. Coulter saw the malicious triumph which his partners had in view, and he took a laudable pleasure in keeping them on the tenter-hooks where he had ingeniously placed them.

"It matters not what he has done," he replied, "but I have other views for him. As an Irishman he deserves punishment, which I will take upon me to administer in a proper and efficacious manner. Leave him out, I tell you again, and go on to other matters of greater importance!"

Next time Mr. Coulter saw Con, which happened to be on the following day, he abruptly saluted him with "What's to be done now, O'Regan—your services are no longer required in our establishment?"

Con's countenance fell. He was evidently taken quite aback, but, after clearing his throat twice or thrice, he got courage to say in a careless way:

"Well, sir, I'm sorry to hear it, but I suppose it can't be helped. I was thinkin' you'd be for keepin' me on, but as you're not, why I must only try if I can find another situation."

"And that will be no easy matter, I can tell you," said Mr. Coulter, gravely. "In the present state of public feeling, the best recommendation I could give you would hardly procure you employment amongst the merchants of this city. You see yourself how excited the populace are against you Irish, and employers are more or less exposed to public censure by having anything to do with you."

"Well, sir," said Con, with a sigh, "that same is hard enough, for I'm sure they'll never find any one to serve them more faithfully than most of us do. Still, as I said, it can't be helped. If all goes to all, sir, why we must only go to some other city in search of employment."

"Even that would not better your condition," said Mr. Coulter. "All our principal cities in these Eastern States are, I am sorry to say, equally intolerant at the present time as regards you. But, cheer up! Con—things are not quite so bad as you seem to think. I told you on the night of the fire that Sam Coulter was not ungrateful, but I have as yet given you no proof that what I said was true. How would you like to go out West and settle on a farm—a farm of your own, Con, mind that?"

Con's eyes sparkled and his cheeks glowed. He

seemed half afraid to admit the possibility of such a thing. "Is it how would I like it, Mr. Coulter?—oh, then, indeed, sir, it's the very thing I *would* like, if—if—it could ever come to pass. But sure it can't—there's no such good luck in store for me."

"How do you know that?" inquired Mr. Coulter, sharply.

"Why, sir, I'm told it takes a power of money to get settled on a farm. Isn't that place you speak of very far away, sir?"

"I spoke of no particular place," said Mr. Coulter, smiling. "I said *the West* in general. There are three States to which the rush of settlers is now tending—these are: Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, all of which bid fair to be great and flourishing States. Many of your countrymen are to be found in each of them already, I understand, so that you will find yourself quite at home in any of them."

Con smiled and shook his head. "To be sure I will, sir—when I get there. But where is the money to come from?"

"That's the secret," said Mr. Coulter; "but as you must know it sooner or later, I believe I may as well tell you now. I promised my two partners this day that I would dispose of a troublesome fellow of your name, so as to clear him off the premises. Well! I happen to have a brace of old maiden sisters, who have little to do with their money besides carrying out their odd notions. Now they both happen to have conceived an interest in your wel

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fare from certain representations made to them at
 times regarding you and Winny—not that they have
 ever seen much of *her*, poor girl! for they and my
 wife are not on the best of terms, and so they only
 cross my threshold once a year, when they make
 their New Year's visit. But I see them myself from
 time to time as opportunity offers, and, as I told
 you—at least I *think* I did—they are willing to lend
 you some three or four hundred dollars for the pur-
 pose of settling on a farm out West, until such times
 as you can pay it back, which I know will not be
 long. Do you understand?" He saw that Con
 looked embarrassed as well as surprised.

"Oh yes, sir, I understand—well enough—but
 then it would never do for a poor man like me to go
 under such a load of debt. I'd never be able to pay
 it, sir. Not but what I'm entirely obliged to the
 old ladies——"

Mr. Coulter laughed. "It's well for you," said he,
 "that you're not within their hearing when you
 speak of them as *old* ladies, else I fear your chance
 would be forfeited. Ladies are never *old*, Con! and
 especially unmarried ladies—remember that!"

"D'ye tell me so, sir?" said Con, in surprise.
 "Well! that's something I never knew before—I
 thought the quality grew old just like other people,
 an' I wouldn't have called your sisters old, only
 yourself said it the first. I ask your pardon, Mr
 Coulter, if I made too free."

"Tut, man, there is no need of any apology; I

merely meant to put you on your guard—you see the truth is not always to be told. But, come! what shall I say to my sisters?"

"Well, sir! if you'll just be good enough to tell the *young ladies*," with a sly emphasis on the adjective, which made Mr. Coulter smile, "that I'm forever obliged to them, and that if there's any reasonable prospect of my bein' able to pay back their money, I'll take the loan of it with all the veins of my heart. But you know, sir, and you'll please to say so, that I have to consult with Winny, and another thing I'd like to try an' find out whether there's any priests or chapels in them parts. I'll ask Father Timlin, sir, this very day."

"Very well, Con, that is all fair enough, but I hope you will make up your mind to embrace this golden opportunity, let the priests or the churches be as they may. If you miss this chance you may never have such another!"

"It won't be *my* fault, Mr. Coulter, if I do miss it, for it's what even Biddy—that's my wife, sir!—tells me in her letter that if I could get a spot of land of my own, if it was only six or eight acres, where we wouldn't have any rent to pay, she'd be the proudest woman of her name."

"Six or eight acres!" repeated Mr. Coulter; "and would you call that a farm in Ireland?"

"Why, then, to be sure we would, sir, an' if a body had that same at any kind of an easy rent, he might live happy and comfortable on it—but it's

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“Coulter, if I do miss
that’s my wife, sir!—
could get a spot of
six or eight acres,
rent to pay, she’d be
me.”

the rents, sir, that keep down the poor farmers in
Ireland, and drives them away out of the country
altogether.”

“Poor people!” said Mr. Coulter to himself;
“poor people! what a melancholy story is theirs,
and yet how little sympathy do they meet from
those who have all the benefit of their expatriation!
—their great and numerous virtues pass unheeded,
and only their faults are noted to be magnified into
heinous crimes!—well, Con!” he said aloud, “you
will think of what I proposed to you—talk it over
with your friends, at your leisure, and let me know
the result!”

“I will, sir, and may the Lord bless you—but Mr.
Coulter,” going a step after him, “I forgot to ask
about Miss Rachel—how is she the day, sir?”

“Much better, Con, I thank you—so much better,
indeed, that Winny will soon be at liberty again—
that is”—he was going to add, “provided she do not
catch the infection,” but glancing at Con’s eager,
anxious face, he suddenly stopped, and muttering
something about having delayed too long, he hastily
turned away, while Con stood looking after him in
amazement till he disappeared round a corner.

The clock in Mr. Coulter’s hall had just struck
seven that same evening when Con O’Regan rang
the bell and told Hannah who opened the door that
he wished to speak with Winny. The young lady
civilly invited him to walk in and sit down, and
away she stripped to inform Winny, taking care,

however, to keep at a safe distance from the door of the prohibited chamber. Telling her young patient that she would be back in a very few minutes, Winny descended the stairs with a light and rapid step, thinking only of the pleasure of seeing her brother, and hearing from his wife and children, forgetting for the moment the danger of conveying the infection to Con, when just at the head of the first staircase, she came full against Mrs. Coulter, who was leisurely proceeding to her own chamber. Mrs. Coulter drew back in great trepidation, at the same time admonishing Winny to keep off.

"Dear me! Winny," she exclaimed, in tremulous accents, "how very thoughtless it was of you to come so near me when you saw that I didn't observe your approach!—now, if I should happen to take that dreadful fever, I shall have only you to blame!—what on earth are you doing here?" and she kept moving away from Winny, holding a vinaigrette containing aromatic vinegar to her nose.

"I'm going down to see my brother, ma'am," was Winny's quiet answer, "though maybe it's what I shouldn't do when there's such danger of infection. Still I'll go in God's name, for I know Con won't fear to have me near him if there was a plague on me, let alone a fever. Will you please to pass on, ma'am, till I get going down stairs?"

The passage was quickly cleared, and Winny could not help laughing as she made her way to where Con sat. The fraternal salutation was even warmer than

usual, as the brother and sister clasped each other's hand, and exchanged scrutinizing glances. Con's eyes filled with tears as he hastily took in the increased emaciation of his sister's face and form, but Winny, reading his thoughts, did not choose to encourage them.

"So you've got a letter from Biddy, I hear!—how are they all at home?"

"All well, Winny, thanks be to God, and Biddy sends her love and best respects to you. But I'll give you the letter to read." And he put his hand in his pocket in search of the precious missive.

"No, r.o, Con! not now!" said Winny, hastily, "when I go out from here—if I'm living and well, I can read it then, but there's no use takin' it up into the sick-room. An' what news have you, Con?"

"The best of news, Winny!—the best of news!—an' you'll say when you hear it that I'm one of the luckiest men livin'."

"Why, what in the world is it, Con?" cried Winny, involuntarily catching a portion of her brother's animation.

Con proceeded to relate his conversation of the morning with Mr. Coulter, Winny listening with a kindling eye and a glowing cheek. She had hardly patience to hear him out.

"Well! and *did* you go to Father Timlin, Con?—and what did he say?"

"Oh! he said I might make myself quite easy with regard to the clergy and the churches, for that if

there's not a priest or a church in every settlement, there soon would, he was sure. He said he'd wish *me* to go to the State of Iowa, for that there's a great number of Irish people—good Catholics—scattered all over it, and that there will be more and more goin' every day. Now, Winny, isn't that a good chance that the Lord has given us?"

"It is indeed, Con, blessed be His name!" She was about to say something else when the door bell rang, and whispering to her brother to come soon again till they would talk the matter over, Winny opened the door and admitted the doctor, who was come to pay his evening visit. Dr. Richards was not an old man, but neither was he what might be called young, so that he came under the category of "middle-aged gentlemen," although there was that in the flashing glance of his eye when he chose to turn it full on any one, which told of passions naturally strong and never subjected to restraint. Still his demeanor was staid and rather dignified, and as he stood at the very head of his profession, he was favored with an extensive and lucrative practice, chiefly among the higher classes, and his little backslidings, if perchance he had them, were politely permitted by his patrons and patronesses of the conventicle to "rest in the shade," as trifles unworthy of notice. On the present occasion the doctor seemed a little surprised when the door was opened by Winny, whom he had not seen for weeks long out of the sick-room, and his surprise

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was nowise lessened by the sight of our friend Con, who stood with his hat in his hand almost behind the door. The doctor's quick eye glanced from the handsome young Irishman to the now blushing face of Winny, who felt a little embarrassed by the *rencontre*, suspecting in a moment the wrong construction which might be put on the affair.

"So, Winny," said the doctor, "your patient must be going on well this evening when you can come down to receive visitors."

"Yes, sir, I think Miss Rachel's a great deal better, and I just came down to speak a few words to my brother here. I'm goin' up now."

"Your brother, eh?—oh! I beg pardon, I thought it had been *somebody else*." And the doctor chuckled in a singular way as he mounted the stairs. Winny only waited to let Con out and then hastened back to her post. She found the physician in the act of feeling Rachel's pulse.

"Our patient is decidedly better," he said—"very much better, indeed. You have cheated death for this time, Rachel. Good news that for pa,—a'nt it?"

He then asked Winny a few questions relative to the patient, and having obtained satisfactory answers, he said with a peculiar smile: "You are a clever girl, Winny,—a most excellent nurse, and as such I can safely recommend you, should you think of continuing at the business."

"I thank you kindly, sir," said Winny, "but I have no thoughts of that—it was only to oblige Mr.

Coulter that I came to mind Miss Rachel, an' I know I'm no great hand at the business. But sure I done all I could."

"You did very well, indeed, Winny, better, in fact, than many a professional nurse would have done." He had now reached the passage, when he suddenly remembered that he had given Winny no directions as to the patient's diet, and called her for that purpose. Having given her the necessary orders, he seized her hand and drew her farther down the narrow hall, Winny trying in vain to extricate her fingers.

"Winny," said he, in a low whisper, almost close to her ear, "I know exactly how you stand here—I am well aware of Mrs. Coulter's base ingratitude—don't engage with her again on any account. Mrs. Richards wants a chambermaid just now, and I will see that you get better wages than any one else. Won't you go at once and engage with her?" The doctor's whole manner was so strangely familiar, his looks so excited, and his tone so impassioned, that Winny trembled all over and renewed her efforts to get away, not deigning a word of reply. But when he went still farther, approaching his face quite close to hers, with an unmistakeable intention, Winny, as if suddenly endowed with twofold strength, snatched her hand from the grasp of the libertine, and with that same hand gave him such a blow on the face that he staggered back against the wall.

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"Take that now," said the angry girl, as she passed him at full speed; "that'll teach you to keep a civil distance from the like of me for the time to come. If ever you dare say a word of the kind to me again or take any liberty whatsoever, I'll tell Mr. Coulter so surs as my name is Winny O'Regan!"—and shaking her fist at him, she entered Rachel's room and closed the door after her, leaving the doctor to find his way down stairs as best he might.

Winny was well pleased to find that Rachel had turned to the wall and was already half asleep. Falling on her knees she once more offered herself to God and solemnly placed herself under the protection of the ever-blessed Virgin, which was her constant practice, then she arose, strong in the might of faith, and said to herself: "The smooth-faced vagabond!—isn't *he* a nice lad to have attendin' a family?—but sure he thought *I* was only a poor simple Irish girl and that he could do as he liked with me. I'll go bail, though, that he'll keep clear of me from this out!"

As for the doctor, he made his way down stairs as quietly as possible, holding his handkerchief to his bleeding nose, alternately vowing vengeance against "that uncultivated Irish virago" and framing excuses for his accident in case he met Mrs. Coulter. Fortunately, that lady was in the kitchen preparing supper, so that the worthy physician, finding the coast clear, stepped noiselessly to the door and let himself out.

CHAPTER X.

For a few days after the incident recorded at the end of our last chapter, Dr. Richards continued his daily visits, and Winny was no little surprised to see that his manner towards herself was just the same as before. Not the smallest degree of embarrassment did he manifest even on the following day; neither was there any appearance of resentment. He seemed to have forgotten all about the affair of the previous day, and gave the necessary directions in a tone of the coolest indifference, just as though nothing unusual had happened. But it was not so with Winny, who could not so easily forget the shameful insult that had been so lately offered her by the man before her. The fresh, unsullied purity of her heart made her shrink with disgust from him who had dared to take such a liberty, and do as she would, she could not look him in the face, but received her orders in profound silence with only a nod of assent.

"Do you hear what I say, my good girl?" said the doctor in a raised voice, apparently determined to make her speak. But Winny, on her side, was

just as determined, and she, therefore, nodded again.

"I fear your nurse is becoming deaf, Rachel!" said Dr. Richards, addressing his patient.

"Oh dear no, doctor," said Rachel, quickly; "Winny hears quite well. I was speaking to her just before you came in, and she heard every word I said. But Winny don't ever talk a great deal—dear Winny," and she held out her hand to her nurse with a look of the tenderest affection.

"She probably *thinks* the more!" was the doctor's sarcastic answer, as bidding Rachel good morning he hurried down stairs. In the hall he was met by Mrs. Coulter, who invited him into the front parlor and asked how he found her daughter.

"Oh! your daughter goes on very well—very well, indeed. I hope to have her down stairs in a week or so. But what sort of person is that Winny?" This was said in a very pointed manner, and, as the doctor expected, at once excited Mrs. Coulter's curiosity.

"Why, really, doctor, I hardly know how to answer your question, although she *has* lived here for some years. She is Irish, as you must be aware!"

"I know it, Madam, and, of course, that accounts for some of her eccentricities, but there is still much that requires explanation. Excuse me, Mrs. Coulter! nothing but my great and heartfelt interest in your family could induce me to interfere in such matters. Do you propose keeping this girl on?"

"Well! I certainly *did* intend to keep her, doctor,

but if you have found out anything discreditable—of course, that alters the case. I would not keep a doubtful character in my house on any account. Pray, doctor, what have you heard or seen that makes you think Winny an improper person?"

"Oh! I beg your pardon, Madam," said the bland physician, "I did not say *improper*. That is too strong a word. I only meant to state for your information, that Winny is very bold and forward in her demeanor. Her example is no great advantage for young ladies, I assure you."

The doctor rose as he said this, and was moving towards the door with a grave and courteous bow but Mrs. Coulter detained him.

"Well! really, doctor, you surprise me!—now, let Winny have what other faults she might, I always thought her very modest indeed. But then there is no trusting these Irish. They are wholly destitute of principle, and—how, indeed, could it be otherwise, benighted as they are? The mean, hypocritical jade! I shall pack her off this very day at an hour's notice! I always thought her too smooth to be sincere!"

This unexpected warmth rather alarmed the doctor, who had good reasons for wishing to avoid a sudden outbreak. "Now really, Mrs. Coulter," said he, turning back a step or two, "if I had ever dreamed of your acting so, I should not have said a word on the subject. I tell you, I saw nothing positively bad in the girl's conduct—I merely warned you, in order to put you on your guard. There is no need

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to exasperate Mr. Coulter at present by bringing any charge against his favorite, and, besides, my dear Madam, what would your daughter do just now without her? Just let matters stand as they are until Rachel is quite recovered, and then you can quietly dismiss Winny without assigning any reasons. That is my advice, and I speak, as you are well aware, from my sincere friendship for you. I do not desire to injure this girl, but rather to serve you."

The doctor's reasoning was so cogent that the lady was forced to yield, though she did so with great reluctance. She knew it would be next to impossible to convince Mr. Coulter of any impropriety on the part of Winny, and neither could Winny's presence be very well dispensed with as matters stood, so Mrs. Coulter had nothing for it but to "bide her time." The doctor, on his part, watched her from under his bushy brows, as a cat watches a mouse, and seeing that he had brought her round to the desired point, he made his bow and retired, well satisfied with the result of his first vengeful attempt.

Things went on smoothly enough for five or six days. Rachel was at length convalescent, and Dr. Richards discontinued his visits, charging Mrs. Coulter in a parting interview not to do anything rash with regard to Winny, but to get her off as quietly as possible. "And while she does remain in your house," said he, "be careful how you permit her to stand in the hall with 'tall Irish cousins'—or *brothers*"—he added, with smiling emphasis. "Be true to

your own character, now as ever ; uniting the gentleness of the dove with the cunning of the serpent. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Coulter ! I hope to see you at class-meeting this evening."

"If possible, I will be there, doctor. Good-bye !"

About the end of the week, Mr. Coulter had the unspeakable joy of assisting Rachel down stairs to her usual place in the family circle. Winny was hardly less rejoiced, and she could not help following the father and daughter to the dining-room door, so as to enjoy unseen the pride and pleasure of seeing Miss Rachel in her old place. Tears of joy coursed each other down her pale cheek as she observed the trembling eagerness with which Mr. Coulter anticipated his daughter's wishes and supplied her little wants. Having feasted for a few pleasant moments on this joyful scene, she stole up to her own little room on the attic story, where, sitting down on the side of her bed, she began seriously to think of what she had next to do.

"It'll be hard for me to get away from here," said she to herself, "as Mrs. Coulter has no girl. To be sure, she'll soon get as many as she wants, when once the sickness is over, an' I can't think of leavin' her till she suits herself. If it was only on Mr. Coulter's account, and Miss Rachel's, I'd stay longer than that to oblige the family, though, goodness knows ! I don't owe the mistress anything ! But then—no matter—if she asks me to stay, I will, at any rate."

Having thus made up her mind, Winny went down stairs again, and seeing that tea was over, she timidly asked at the door: "May I take down the tea-things, ma'am?"

"Yes!" said Mrs. Coulter, with more than her usual coldness. Winny cleared the table, without a word, and Mr. Coulter gave a reproving glance at his wife, who only smiled contemptuously, as she walked with her daughters into the front parlor.

About an hour after, when Winny had just finished washing the tea-things, Mrs. Coulter made her appearance in the kitchen, and told her that as she had now fulfilled her engagement, she was at liberty to go whenever she pleased. Affecting not to notice Winny's look of surprise, the lady went on: "I need make no apology, for I know you are well pleased to get away, Winny! You will have no trouble, I dare say, in finding another situation!"

"I hope not, ma'am," said Winny, coldly; "but do you wish me to leave to-night?—if so, I had better go at once, as it is getting late."

"Oh my, no! I should be sorry to have you leave at such an hour as this. To-morrow, after breakfast, I will pay you whatever you think right for caring Rachel, and you can go then as soon as you like. Good night, Winny!"

Winny's reply was scarcely audible, for her heart was too full for words. When Mrs. Coulter had left the kitchen, she glanced around to see that there was nothing out of its place, and then sat

down in the darkest corner, to enjoy the luxury of grief. Thankful that no mortal eye beheld her, she gave herself up for a long, long time—how long she hardly knew—to the mournful reminiscences of departed joys, of days

“Too purely blest to last.”

Visions of domestic happiness, based on the ceaseless interchange of heart-warm affection, arose in their sunny light, shedding a transitory beam on the loneliness and desolation of her state at that hour. Soothed by these sad yet sweet recollections, she gradually began to remember that *all* the past was not effaced—all her loved ones not yet gone. She was not yet *alone* in the wide world. Her brother remained, and what was more, she had him within ten minutes' walk of her. Why then should she despond? Why should Mrs. Coulter's heartless ingratitude cause her so much pain? “Sure I had no right to expect anything else from the same woman,” said she to herself, “for it's little else ever I saw by her. It wasn't for her sake I did what I did, an' I'd cheerfully do it over again for the master—God's blessin' be about him now and forever! And sure isn't he putting Con in a fair way of doin' well in earnest, an' please God he'll have a place of his own far away from this, an' he'll have Biddy and the little ones out in no time, an' I'll be there to see it all—with God's assistance,” she added, suddenly recollecting herself. “Ah! Mrs. Coulter dear, it's

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s. Coulter dear, it's

little I'd care about your odd ways then! But if anything comes to prevent it"—yes! that was a serious consideration!—but Winny's sanguine hopes—so newly excited—were not to be so easily crushed, and she quickly answered her own saddening doubt, with her favorite axiom—"It's all in the hands of God, and He'll bring this about and everything else that's good for us, just as he brought me safe through the dangers of the last two or three weeks!—I know He will!" and with that, Winny jumped from her seat, and bounded up the stairs as buoyant as hope could make her, to answer the master's ring, which just then echoed through the house.

The old gentleman smiled and nodded in a way peculiar to himself, saying, as Winny took his hat, "It does me good, Winny, to see you at your post again!"

Winny's thanks were cut short by the shrill voice of Mrs. Coulter, whose head projected from the dining-room door, back in the hall. "Is that Mr. Coulter?" was her somewhat superfluous question.

"Don't you see it is?" replied her husband, who somehow did not relish the question or the tone in which it was put.

"Well! I didn't know but it might be some of Winny's visitors, and I have no idea of permitting such people to be introduced here at such a time."

Winny was already at the head of the kitchen-stairs, but she turned back on hearing this singular speech, and confronting Mrs. Coulter with a more

confident look than she had, probably, ever before assumed, or had had occasion to assume, she said: "Will you please to tell me, Mrs. Coulter, what you mean by them words?"

"That is hardly necessary," said Mrs. Coulter, turning into the room; "I rather think you understand my meaning."

"I do not," said Winny, firmly, "but I must and will know it. Mr. Coulter, I appeal to you, sir."

"Prudence," said Mr. Coulter, very gravely, "I see you have got some new notion in your head. Be so good as to explain it. I am confident that Winny has nothing to fear from your speaking out, and, moreover, she has a right to demand an explanation!"

Thus pressed, Mrs. Coulter was on the point of repeating what she had heard to Winny's disadvantage, when suddenly remembering the doctor's solemn injunction of secrecy, she wrapped herself up once more in her freezing and tantalizing reserve.

"Don't be *too* confident, Samuel!" she said, addressing her husband; "it may be quite as well for Winny that I should withhold the desired explanation—people do not always know what is good for them. At all events, both you and she may rest assured that I will not speak another word on the subject this night. Go down stairs, Winny!"

Winny felt half inclined to persist in her demand, but Mr. Coulter seeing that his wife was fully determined to keep her secret for that time, said to

Winny: "You may as well do as she bids you, Winny. There is time enough to see to this matter."

Obedient to her master's kindly-meant advice, Winny descended to the kitchen, but not before she heard Rachel saying from her place on a low sofa near the fire: "Dear ma! how *can* you talk so to poor Winny? Think of all her kindness to me!"

What the mother said was lost to Winny's ears, for she had no wish to act the eavesdropper, but her heart swelled with grateful affection for Rachel, as she murmured within herself: "She's her father's daughter, every inch of her!—I did nothing for you, poor child! but what I'd do again to-morrow, if you stood in need of it, let your mother be as she may!"

Next morning, Winny was up betimes, and had the breakfast almost ready when Mrs. Coulter entered the kitchen, although she, too, was stirring earlier than usual.

"You can go now as soon as you like," said the lady of the house, with a frigid reserve, intended to prevent Winny from asking troublesome questions. "How much have I to give you?"

"Nothing, ma'am,—not a cent! I wouldn't do what I did for any money,—I did it on account of my master's kindness, and because I have a likin' for Miss Rachel, and I'll never handle a farthing of your money, Mrs. Coulter, with my knowledge or consent. All I want of you, ma'am, is to tell me

what you have in again me, an' I'll not leave the house till I hear it !"

Fearing lest her husband should be down stairs before she could get rid of Winny, Mrs. Coulter forgot herself so far as to say :

" Ask Dr. Richards—*he'll* tell you !" The words were scarcely uttered when she was heartily sorry, but it was too late to retract.

" Dr. Richards, ma'am !" said Winny, turning red and then pale ; " so *he's* at the bottom of the mischief !—I might have guessed as much if I had only thought a minute. Dr. Richards indeed !—if he had his way, I'd be what he says I am—but what am I saying ?—I musn't forget my duty as a Christian !—May the Lord forgive him, poor man ! as I forgive him this day—though it's hard enough to do it, I don't deny—but still I do forgive him, as I hope to be forgiven at my last hour !—well ! good-bye, Mrs. Coulter ; I suppose there's nothing more to be said—if you can so easily be made to suspect a person who has lived in your family for nigh five years, anything I could say wouldn't alter your opinion. I leave my case in the hands of God, and He'll show, in His own good time, whether Dr. Richards and you wronged me or not. Good-bye, ma'am ! I suppose you don't want me to see Mr. Coulter before I go, so, of course, I'll not ask to see him. He knows my heart, and that's enough for me." Taking up her little bundle, she was leaving the

kitchen when Mrs. Coulter delayed her a moment to insist on her taking payment.

"You really must take something for your trouble, Winny! I cannot let you go unpaid."

"I've told you already, ma'am, that I never mean to handle a cent of your money!" repeated Winny, endeavoring to suppress her indignation. "No money could make up to me for the wrong you have done me, so say no more about it. Let me go in peace!"

"But won't you have some breakfast before you go?"

"No, ma'am, thank you!—not a bit. I'll have my breakfast where I know I'm welcome."

Nothing more was said on either side, and Winny, quickening her steps on hearing Mr. Coulter moving above, made her way to the door, and thence to the street with the least possible noise.

When Mr. Coulter came down to breakfast he was informed by his wife that Winny was "gone off in a pet—pretty work, indeed!" she added, "for no other reason than my giving her that friendly advice last evening. Ah! Samuel, Samuel, I fear you and I were both mistaken in that girl!"

"I don't know as to you," said the old gentleman, tartly, "but I have never been mistaken in Winny. Never, never, Prudence! nor never will, I am pretty certain. I have always thought her a most excellent girl, and so I think her still, Mrs. Coulter. Pretty work, you say, and so say I, but

in a far different sense. Pretty work, indeed, to see such a girl turned out of this house after her long and faithful services—and, above all, after this last heroic act of hers!—ah! woman, you may well be ashamed of yourself! you are unworthy of having a faithful servant, since you cannot appreciate fidelity. You have been listening to some black-hearted, foul-mouthed knave—most likely one of your canting friends, who has never a good word for anything Irish, and you have punished yourself, I can assure you, not Winny,—she will make friends, wherever she goes, and her character will stand the test of inquiry, but you have deprived yourself of such a servant as you will never have again on your floor!—get my breakfast, will you?”

“Why, Samuel, how you do talk!—if you only knew who it was that told me, you wouldn't speak so lightly of the matter!”

“I don't care who it is, Mrs. Coulter! if it was the Rev. Irving Peabody himself I wouldn't believe it any more than I do now! Make haste with the breakfast, I tell you, and let me go to my business!”

Immediately after leaving Mr. Coulter's, Winny proceeded to Paul Bergen's, where, standing on the steps outside the door, she bade Mrs. Bergen “good morning,” asking whether she might venture in. Nora ran forward with outstretched hands to receive her, crying out even before she reached her: “Venture in, Winny!—ay! indeed might you if it was a plague-house you were comin' from. Come in, *astora*

machree, until I get a right look at you. Well! sure enough, you don't look one-half so bad as I thought you would. An' so, with the blessin' of God, you've escaped the fever!—och! sure, sure, aren't you the lucky girl, an' amn't I the joyful woman to see you lookin' so well after your long fatigue—Glory, honor, and praise be to God!"

The children were almost wild with joy to see their favorite once again, and the two elder pouted a good deal because they had to go to school that forenoon. But finding that their mother was inflexible, and being assured by Winny that they should find her there on their return, they at length made their exit, looking as woe-begone as possible. Whilst Winny put her clothes in the box, remarking as she did so that she had washed them well the day before, Nora had some tea drawn, and a nice round of toast made, and poor Winny required no pressing, for, as she said herself, what Mrs. Bergen gave out of her hand did a body good, it was given with such a good heart.

"An' now, Winny, what's the news?" said her anxious friend; "I thought you'd be prevailed upon to stay at Mr. Coulter's."

"To tell you the truth, Mrs. Bergen dear, I wasn't asked to stay. Mrs. Coulter seems to have taken some dislike to me, an' as soon as ever Miss Rachel was able to go about, she warned me to clear out. She was in the kitchen this morning bright an' early, to get me away before the master was afoot."

"The Lord bless me, Winny, what sort of a woman is she at all?—why, she must have a heart as hard as a stone!" Poor Nora's earnest simplicity brought a smile to Winny's face, but she merely answered:

"I don't know how it is. To tell the truth of her I never found her hard-hearted until now—she had always a cold, stiff kind of a way with her, but then she had more feelin' in her at times than a body would think. God knows how it is, and to Him I leave it. I'm goin' to Father Timlin on Saturday, please God, before I go to any other place, an' I'll speak to him about it, an' see what he'll say."

It will be seen that Winny, with her usual prudence, gave no hint of the real state of the case. When Saturday came she went to Father Timlin, and after finishing her confession, told him as briefly as possible the whole affair from beginning to end.

"And now, father," said she, "I want you to tell me what's best for me to do."

"Have you spoken of this to any one—I mean of that man's conduct towards you?"

"No, father, not a word!"

"You have acted wisely, my child, and as became a Christian. Persevere in the same course, and be sure that God will take care of your reputation. Nothing short of actual necessity should induce you to speak of such a thing. The evil designs of that bad man were defeated through the ever-watchful care of Providence, and your own prompt decision. Be of good heart, daughter, for the shafts of the

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Strengthened and consoled by these paternal
counsels, Winny returned to her temporary home,
her mind freed from every shadow of uneasiness, and
prepared to take anything that might befall her as
coming from the hand of God. She saw Con that
same evening, and heard all he had to communicate
with regard to his change of prospects.

"I went to see the old ladies," said he, "as Mr.
Coulter told me, and they say they'll lend me the
money with all the pleasure in life. I declare they're
two fine old ladies, Winny, just the model of the
master himself, one of them especially, that's Miss
Debby, the youngest of the two. An' so, it's all
settled now that I'm to go out to Iowa early in the
spring, if I can find anybody goin'. But sure if I
don't, Winny dear, I'd never find my way at all—
how could I?"

"Oh! never mind that, Con," said his sister, with
tears that were neither all joy nor all sorrow trick-
ling down her faded cheek; "if it's the will of God
for you to go, you'll get safe to your journey's end,
you may be sure! But what about Biddy and the
children?—won't you wait for them?"

"Oh no, Winny, the master says it's best for me
to go out there and prepare a home for them and
you before I send for you. You'll just stay as you
are till they come out from Ireland, and then, with
God's help, I'll send for you all!"

Winny smiled through her tears, and was about to speak, but Paul Bergen broke out with :

"I wish to the Lord I was able to go with you, Con!—if I was, I wouldn't call the king my cousin. But sure, sure," he added, with a sigh, "what chance has poor Paul Bergen of such a turn-up as that?"

"Hut, tut, man, don't be so faint-hearted," said Con; "you don't know what may be in store for you. See what luck came to me, just when I was least expectin' it."

"True for you, Con," put in Nora; "people can make luck for themselves if they only try—that is, with the blessin' of God. And sure, Paul dear, if we never get any uprise, only jist keep as we are, why we can't complain. For my part, I'm as well content as any poor woman needs to be—if we can only get the children brought up in the love and fear of God, I wish for nothing more."

"Yes, but Nora," said her husband, "if sickness was to come on me, or death—what would you and the children do?—you're not able for any hard work, an' so they'd have an excuse that you weren't fit to support them, an' they'd take them every one from you, as like as not, an' cram them into some cursed school, or House of Refuge, as they call them, bad luck to them for man-traps, as they are! where they'd be made black Protestants of. How would you like that, Nora?"

"The Lord save us, Paul!" said Nora, with a

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' said Nora, with a

pale cheek and a quivering lip; "don't be talkin'
that way—don't now, an' God bless you."

"Well, I'm only just telling you what might hap-
pen if the Lord was pleased to call me away; an'
now don't you think it would be a good chance if
we could get on a farm away out in a new place,
amongst our own country people, where we'd have
no trouble in bringing up the children, an' where
you'd have a house and a lot of land to rear them on?
eh! Nora?"

Poor Nora's eyes brightened at the cheering pros-
pect, but heaving a deep sigh, she said: "Where's
the use talkin', though, of what can never come to
pass?"

"*Never* is a long time, Mrs. Bergen," remarked
Con, as he moved towards the door; "don't forget
the old saying: 'Hope well and have well!'—good-
bye now, all of you—I'll be here again, Winny, to-
morrow evening, please God!"



CHAPTER XI.

LATE in the forenoon on the following day, Winny was surprised by a visit from two elderly ladies, dressed exactly alike, in muff and tippet of rich marten, and long cloak of the finest cloth. These were the two Miss Coulters, who, equally benevolent with their brother, had come to take Winny home with them.

"We keep but one servant, Winny," said Miss Coulter, "and we have had the same one for three years. Of course, we couldn't think of parting her, but my brother says that you can do plain work very well, and so we can find employment for you. But you must not expect high wages, Winny!—four dollars a month is as much as we can give you, as we pay Letty seven, and eleven dollars a month is as much as we can well afford. But then we can promise you a comfortable, quiet home, and Letty and you will get on well together—I am sure you will. Don't you think so, Debby?"

Miss Debby did think so, and added that Letty was an Irish girl, too—"that is," said she, "she is of Irish parents. She is not of your religion, Winny

but you mustn't mind that. There's no need quarrelling about religion."

"Well!" said Mrs. Coulter, "do you think you'll come, Winny?"

"Oh! indeed, then I will, miss, and thank you kindly for the offer."

"Very good, Winny! we have a carriage at the door, you see, and will take you right off."

"I am very sorry, miss," said Winny, hesitatingly, "but Mrs. Bergen—that's the woman of the house—is gone out to market, an' I can't well go till she gets back."

"Oh! if that's all, we can wait—can't we, Debby?"

"Certainly!" Miss Debby said, and down the two ladies sat on chairs previously dusted by Winny with much care. So they called to them little Jim, who had been whipping his top before their entrance, but had forthwith retreated into a remote corner, whence he looked with wondering eyes on the "grand ladies," dwelling with as much curiosity as admiration on their rich furs, which were something new to Jim. It required many pressing invitations from the ladies, enforced by an imperative command from Winny, before the urchin would leave his corner, but at length he moved slowly out of his entrenchment behind a chair, and lash in hand, approached Miss Debby as the most prepossessing of the two. At first the child was rather shy, but after a while he became quite communicative, and even

ventured to ask what *they* were, pointing to the furs.

"These, child?" said the good-natured Debby; "oh! these are the skins of animals made into clothing for men and women." This solution was far from being satisfactory to Jim, who continued to eye the mysterious objects from time to time, as though he wished he *could* make out what manner of things they were. The visitors gradually wound themselves into the boy's confidence, and he would willingly have given them the most minute information concerning matters in general appertaining to the household, had they not themselves turned his thoughts into another channel, by asking if he was sorry to lose Winny.

"Lose Winny?" he repeated, inquiringly.

"Yes, Winny is going with us, you know."

This was very intelligible to Jim, and he replied accordingly: "Me no let Winny go."

"Oh! but she will come back soon to see you."

The child shook his head, and repeated stoutly: "Me no let her go." Before any more could be said his mother came in, bending under the weight of her basket, though its contents were not very heavy, and very much flurried, too, she was at sight of the carriage. Seeing the two ladies so quietly seated in her humble dwelling did not tend to quiet her nerves, but she nevertheless set down her basket and dropped a very low curtsy, saying:

"Your servant, ladies." Then seeing Winny put-

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ting on her bonnet, she approached her, and asked
in a whisper : " What are you about, honey ?—sure
you're not going away ?"

" Yes I am," said Winny, in an audible voice ;
" the two Miss Coultera, you see, are come for me
to go an' live with them."

" Ha! ha!" said Nora, exultingly, unmindful of
the presence of the ladies : " See that now, Winny
astore,—that's just the ould sayin' ; ' there never was
one door shut but there was another open.' Well !
I'm sorry to lose you, *alanna machree* ! but I know
it's for your own good this time, so I'll not repine.
May the Lord bless you, an' that He will, wherever
you go."

After a few civil words from the sisters to Mrs.
Bergen, responded to by sundry smiles and blushes
on her part, they each gave Jim a quarter dollar
to buy " sweeties," charging him to divide with
the Janie and Patsey of whom he had told them so
much, and not to forget the baby.

" But baby ha'nt got any teeth," said Jim, follow-
ing them to the door, partly to get a last kiss from
Winny and partly to impress the fact of baby's inca-
pacity to eat candy on the minds of his new ac-
quaintances. " Mother says he'll have some teeth
soon, though, and me can keep some candy for him
till then."

" Very good, Jim," said Miss Debby, stopping at
the door to pat the boy's curly head, " but I fear the
candy won't keep so long," she laughingly added

"Never mind, I'll send or bring you more before then."

This promise was very seasonable at the moment, as it served to divert Jim's mind from dwelling on Winny's departure, which he now witnessed with philosophic composure, wholly intent on showing his prize to his mother, who stood at the bottom of the steps till the carriage moved off, when having exchanged a parting nod with Winny, she hastily approached the cradle to look after "poor baby," meditating the while on the wonderful goodness of God in providing for those who love and serve Him.

The house occupied by the Misses Coulter was a neat, plain building in a private street, whose two rows of brick were shaded and agreeably contrasted by corresponding rows of tall trees. The house consisted of two apartments on the first floor, divided by folding doors, and flanked by a narrow hall from which the stairs led to two apartments of similar proportions on the second floor, serving as bedrooms for the sisters, while those below constituted their parlor and dining-room. On the attic story were two small rooms, one of which was Letty's chamber, to be henceforward shared by Winny. The other was used as a kind of store-room. The kitchen was, of course, under ground, approached by an area from without. Everything within and around the house was, as may be imagined, scrupulously neat, and, to do Letty justice, she was herself the picture of cleanliness, and the most active of servants,

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although the dumpiest of all little dumpy women,
(Lord Byron's special abomination.) Fortunately for
Winny, this little bustling personage—whose age
might be about thirty or so—was as good natured as
she was active, and it pleased her mightily to have a
girl of Winny's appearance for a companion.

"I guess you'll find it rather dull here," said she,
after receiving Winny from the hands of Miss
Coulter at the head of the stairs, whence she con-
veyed her to a seat near the stove, and with her own
hands took off her bonnet, remarking that her fingers
must be "kind of numb"—"I guess you'll find it
rather dull."

"I guess I won't," said Winny, good-humoredly,
much pleased with her companion's manner, and
readily falling in with her peculiar humor,—"*I'll*
never fault a place for being quiet, and I've made up
my mind to be happy here whether you like it or
not."

"Well! now, if that an't real good of you!" said
Letty; "Miss Debby told me you was a very good
girl, and I do think you are. How's your brother?"

"Very well, thank you," said Winny, in some sur-
prise; "but how did you know I had a brother?"

"O la me! didn't the ladies tell me all about him
and you. Bless you! I know all about the fire, and
the fever, and how Mrs. Coulter was kinder ungrate-
ful-like, and how Mr. Coulter and the ladies are a-
going to send you two away out West to a farm,
and how you're to stay here with us till your brother

sends for you!—why, child, I know it all!" concluded Letty, almost breathless after her rapid summary of the O'Regan affairs.

"I see you do, indeed," said Winny, laughing; "and now that you know all about *me* so well, will you let me ask *you* one question?"

"Why, yes—a thousand, if you like."

"Only one, Letty!—were you born here or in Ireland?"

"My stars!—born in Ireland—why, how *did* you come to think of that? I was not born ten miles from this here city."

"Why, Miss Coulter told me you were Irish."

"Oh! she just said that because father and mother came from there. But then they both died when I was a youngster—seven or eight years old, or thereabouts, and I was raised by a lady out there where father and mother died."

Winny's countenance fell. "Then you're not a Catholic!" said she; "indeed, Miss Coulter told me you were not!"

"Me a Catholic—a Romanist!" said Letty, distending her round blue eyes to their widest dimensions, as she fixed them on Winny; "why, *no*!—I a'n't any such a thing. Missis was a Baptist, but I never felt any pertiklar call to that 'ere religion, so I never did join any church, because missis said, says she, 'you'll be sure to join us some day soon, so mind you don't join any other church—if you do,' says she, 'I'll never forgive you—never.' So, you see, it

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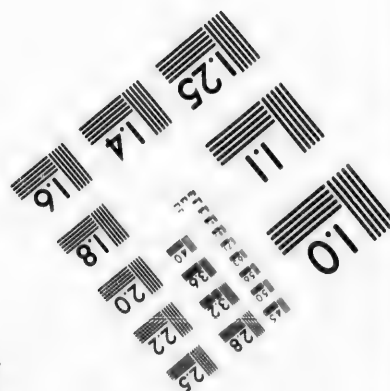
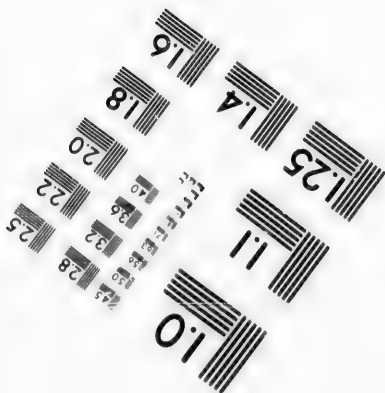
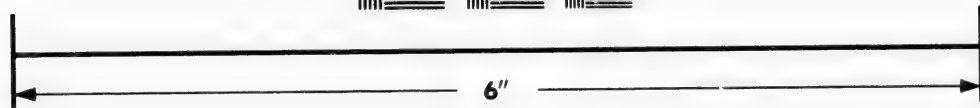
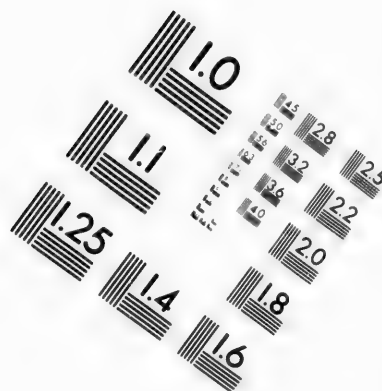
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was all the same to me to join or not, because why, I don't think it makes much difference what religion any one belongs to, if they'll only do what's right, and then missis was so kind and so motherly-like that I wouldn't go for to break her heart by joining any other church, and as for *your* church, Winny, why! bless you! missis wouldn't go within a mile of a Papist meeting-house if she could avoid it."

"I suppose, then, your father and mother were Protestants?"

"Well, I rather think not," said Letty, in a careless tone; "some folks say they were Catholics, but for my part I don't know, and suppose they were," she added, apologetically, "why that couldn't be helped—they came from Ireland, as missis used to say, and I guess most of the folks there are of that persuasion—a'nt they?"

"A good many of them," said Winny, "not all, though. But you don't seem to care much about your parents, Letty."

"Oh, well! I hadn't ought to, I wa'nt brought up with *them*, you know. But don't you feel like eating something? Dinner won't be ready for near an hour."

"Winny thanked her and said she did not feel hungry, but would like to get something to do.

"All right, Winny," said her new friend; "I always like to see folks fond of doing something. I guess you're none of the lazy ones. I'll just go up as soon as I baste this here mutton," opening the

oven-door as she spoke, "and ask Miss Coulter for some work for you."

"Oh! never mind the basting," said Winny, tucking up her sleeves, "leave it to me, and go up at once, like a good girl!"

Letty went accordingly, and speedily returned with a neatly-folded parcel of white cotton in one hand and a small work-basket in the other. "Miss Coulter sends you this, Winny," said she, "and she says only you're a stranger yet, and must needs be lonesome-like for a day or two, she wouldn't have you work in the kitchen. It's up stairs in Miss Debby's room you're to work after you get settled. But I guess," said Letty, lowering her voice to a confidential whisper, "I guess if they find that you keep the work clean, they won't mind where it is done. Our ladies a'nt very particular that way. There now, take that little table, and sit you down by the winder. I tell you what, Winny, I guess we shall have good times together, with nothing on earth to trouble us except our work, and there a'nt any too much of that either, if we only go right straight on with it."

When Winny took up her work at nightfall to show it to the ladies, she found them playing chess at a small table drawn up close to the hearth. This, as Winny afterwards perceived, was their evening's occupation all the week round, Sunday, of course, excepted. The old ladies were, like their brother, not addicted to any particular notion of religion.

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they read their Bible, especially on Sabbath even-
ings, and went twice every Lord's Day to hear the
word according to the Rev. Bertram Shillingworth,
a divine who was just then very popular indeed in
those parts, for and because of his preaching after
no man's fashion but out of the fulness of his own
soul, which was, as he said, an overflowing cistern
of sweet water for the children of God's covenant.
He was what might be called an independent
preacher, in other words he preached "on his own
hook," if we may be permitted to apply such
homely phrase to the dapper, insinuating, and very
polite minister of Jefferson street Church, thus
designated in lieu of any doctrinal appellation.
But as we have already hinted with regard to the
Misses Coulter, what religion they had was by
no means of an acrimonious or aggressive kind.
Well content with themselves and all the world
("Samuel's wife" hardly excepted), they glided from
week to week, from Sabbath, to Sabbath, "along
the even tenor of their way," quite willing that
every one should go to heaven after his own fashion,
and firmly persuaded that all mankind, without
exception, were destined to be gathered, some
sooner, some later, into the garner of the Lord.
This may appear something like Universalism, but
still the good ladies never actually professed that,
or any other *ism*, they were merely "somewhat
more charitable than their neighbors," and thought
it wholly impossible that a God of infinite goodness

could consign any of His creatures to an endless round of torments.

We have left the sisters, meanwhile, engaged in the inspection of Winny's work, the progress of the investigation being duly noted by divers significant nods and gracious smiles directed at each other. First, Miss Coulter inspected it over, then handed it to her sister, who did likewise, then both addressed Winny, who stood quietly behind Miss Coulter's chair:

"Why, really, Winny, you work very well—very well, indeed."

"Small thanks to me, miss," said Winny, "for it's sewing I used to be at home most of my time."

"Well, now, Debby," said Miss Coulter, addressing her sister, "that is very fortunate, very fortunate indeed."

"As how, Dolly?"

"Why, don't you see?—she will have a good chance out West there when she goes. There will be no lack of work, you know. But, Winny, did you ask your brother to come and see you here?"

"Oh yes, miss, thank you—he said he'd come very soon."

"Because you know it a'nt here like Sammy's—I mean my brother's. He can come here just as often as he likes to. Don't forget that!"

"But, Winny," interposed Miss Debby, "tell your brother he mustn't begin to think of our

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Letty. We couldn't get along without Letty, you know!"

Winny could hardly keep from laughing, and was fortunately saved the trying task of answering as gravely as the injunction was given, by the elder sister exclaiming:

"Why, how you talk, my dear! don't you remember that Sammy told us the young man was married, so we needn't be the least afraid of him taking to Letty."

"Oh dear, yes!" said the other; "I had quite forgotten. Well! Winny, you may go down stairs now, and you needn't sew any more to-night."

Winny made a hasty retreat, being still in rather a laughing mood, for there was something irresistibly comical in hearing a grave, elderly gentleman of Mr. Coulter's position designated as *Sammy*, the name, doubtless, by which his sisters had addressed him in their childish days. And so it was. The "Debby," and "Dolly," and "Sammy," which had been the play-names of their early infancy, sat awkwardly to stranger ears on the worthy trio, the youngest of whom had long since passed into "the sere and yellow leaf" of life's autumnal season. But to themselves there was nothing strange in the old "household words" to which their ears had been attuned from earliest childhood. Time had dealt kindly with all the three, and the wrinkles which furrowed their cheeks had no corresponding traces on their kind, benevolent hearts. The sisters, es-

pecially, had lived together all their lives, and their hearts were attuned to the same feelings, their minds regulated by the same principles, if principles their simple rules of action could be called. Bitterness there was none in their composition; a little, a very little acid there might be, and that was reserved for "Sammy's wife," who had early repelled the kindly advances of her sisters-in-law because they would keep going to that Jefferson street Church, that fount of muddy water, where the Word of the Lord was wrested even to the destruction of those who heard it. Other reasons for Mrs. Coulter's coolness were whispered about amongst her intimate friends, but fortunately for the peace of mind of the worthy sisters they rarely or never saw any of that particular set, and consequently never heard the private and more secret sentiments wherewith their saintly relative regarded them. Their nieces they sometimes saw, as they occasionally accompanied their father in his visits, and latterly they had begun to call once in a while without him, on their return from school or the like. Rachel was the favorite with both her aunts, principally because she "belonged to their side of the house," while Hannah resembled her mother, at least in appearance. Still the good ladies dispensed their favors with laudable impartiality, so that even Hannah herself never suspected their greater predilection for Rachel.

After chatting an hour or so with Letty while the latter "cleaned her silver" for the following day,

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Winny took out her beads, remarking that as it must be pretty cold up in the attics, she would say her prayers before they went up.

"Be quick, then," said Letty, "for I'll be soon ready to go to bed."

Winny knelt at a chair near the stove and commenced saying her night-prayers, of which the Rosary always formed a part, very soon forgetting the presence of Letty and her injunction to use dispatch, as she fixed her thoughts successively on the five joyful mysteries, and raised her heart to God with simple, earnest love.

Meanwhile Letty, having finished her work, took her station in front of the stove, with her feet resting on the pan, in order to prepare for bed by a good warming of her body from head to heel. Luxuriating in the grateful warmth, a soothing calm stole over her senses, and Letty, too, was soon lost in the tranquil embrace of the drowsy god. Winny knelt and prayed, but no sound came from her lips, Letty slumbered on her chair, and the venerable Grimalkin of the household napped cozily at her side on the floor. But Letty's slumbers were *not* unbroken, for ever and anon she would start and look around, then rub her eyes, as though endeavoring to recover the use of her suspended faculties, then glance at the silent, motionless figure of her companion, and muttering some brief ejaculation of reproof, she would drop gently again, and without an effort, into the world of dreams. At last Mrs.

Puss, probably hearing a mouse stirring somewhere near, made a bound in the direction of the noise, and even her light weight, coming pounce on the floor, was sufficient to disturb Letty, who, starting to her feet, cast a searching, bewildered glance around, then her eyes fell on Winny, and the measure of her patience was exhausted.

"Why, Lord's sake, Winny! are you a-going to pray all night?—if you are, just say so, will you? and I'll go to bed. There a'n't any use in me waiting here like this?"

Winny had just finished her prayers, so she calmly blessed herself and arose to her feet, saying, with a smile: "I wasn't very long, was I?"

"Long! why I kinder thought you'd never be done. I'm tired to death waiting, and can hardly keep my eyes open." Of course she hadn't tried, but she didn't mind saying so. "What on earth have you got to say when you kneel so that keeps you such a mortal long time?"

"Oh! I have many things to say, Letty, that it wouldn't answer me to leave *unsaid*. I have to pray for myself and all belongin' to me, both living and dead."

A good-humored laugh was Letty's response, as she took up the lamp and examined the fastenings of door and window. "Living and dead!" she repeated; "well! if that a'n't a good one!—why, now, Winny, can't you let the living pray for themselves, they can do it as well as you, if they want to, and

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wasting your breath praying for them. I tell you
what now, Winny, you're a real sensible girl, and
I kind of like you, but mind and don't keep me
waiting another night while you pray for the living
and the dead! Don't now, Winny, or you and I'll
have a tiff about it. I a'nt a-going to put up with
any such nonsense."

Winny promised to say her prayers up stairs for
the future, so as not to keep Letty waiting. Her
heart ached for the heathen darkness which ob-
scured that naturally good understanding, and she
murmured within herself as they ascended the
stairs together: "Isn't it a thousand pities to see
such a good-natured, open-hearted creature so blind
in regard to religion!—and to think that her pa-
rents were both Catholics—my! my! isn't it too
bad?—may the Lord open her eyes to the light of
truth."

After muttering half aloud a drowsy prayer to be
"strengthened in grace," &c., Letty hastily doffed
her garments and tumbled into bed, Winny very
soon following her example.

On the following morning, soon after breakfast,
there came a gentle, hesitating ring to the door,
whereupon Letty exclaimed: "That's Peggy—I'm
sure it is!—she ought to have been here yesterday!
Will you just step up and open the door, Winny,
and bring Peggy down here till I go up and tell the
ladies, after I get through with these dishes?"

Winnie hastened to the door, wondering who Peggy might be, and was rather surprised to see a pretty, youthful-looking girl led by a little boy. This circumstance revealed all too clearly that the light of heaven shining so brightly at the moment was unseen by the dark, lustrous eyes which moved so restlessly in their sockets, as though the girl would seek to penetrate the gloom in which she was shrouded.

"Are the ladies at home, Letty?" said the blind girl, softly.

Winnie replied in the affirmative, but her voice was strange to Peggy, who started and changed color.

"Is Letty gone?" was the next question, as Peggy entered the hall with the assistance of Winnie and her young guide.

"Oh, no!" said Winnie, very gently, "you'll find her in the kitchen below. I'm only here sewing for a start. Just give me your hand, dear, till I take you down stairs."

"Ah! God bless you, *ma colleen bawn!*" said Peggy, warmly squeezing the hand that held hers.

Winnie laughed pleasantly; "why, how do you know I'm a *colleen bawn!*" she asked.

"Oh! I know it by your voice, *alanna!* an' your soft kindly hand. Your voice is very sweet, an' it goes down into my heart. It puts me in mind of the purty blackbirds and thrushes that used to sing in the trees and bushes in a place we'll never see

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again! See!" she repeated with a deep-drawn sigh
—"how *could* we—at least some of us, when the
sight is gone from us forever?"

They had now reached the kitchen, where Letty
gave a cordial reception to the blind girl, and seated
her near the stove.

"What on earth kept you away yesterday?" said
she; "the ladies were real anxious about you, for
fear something had happened."

"Well! nothing at all had happened, you see,"
said Peggy, with a smile, "but I hadn't all the socks
done, an' I thought there was no use comin' till I'd
have them all."

"No more there wasn't. But how's all at home,
and how's Tom?"

There was a blunt archness in the latter part of
the question, which did not escape Winny, and she
fixed her eyes on Peggy's face in order to note the
effect, but Peggy's face was a book which it required
long practice to read, so that Winny made nothing
of her scrutiny further than what Peggy's brief an-
swer conveyed.

"He's well, an' so are all *our* people. Thank you
kindly for askin'. Can I speak to either of the
ladies, Letty? I'm in a hurry this mornin', for
Anty's goin' out after I get back."

"Come along, then, and I'll bring you up to them.
They're in the dining-room."

"Stay there, Johnny," said Peggy to her young
guide, "an' we'll call you up when I'm ready to go."

Where are you, Winny?" she had heard Letty mention Winny's name, which her quick ear was not slow in taking up, "God be with you, *astore*!—my heart warms to you!—indeed it does!"

"And mine to you, Peggy!" was the fervent answer, and as Winny grasped the hand of her new friend the tears trickled from her eyes.

Entering into conversation with the little boy, Winny found that Peggy was his aunt, but further information she did not ask from him. The boy was shy, too, and by no means communicative, and notwithstanding Winny's efforts to draw him out, he still kept eyeing her askance, and could hardly be got to answer a question. At the sound of Letty's voice calling him, he scampered up stairs with right good will, and laid hold of his aunt's hand with renewed cheerfulness and activity.

When they were gone Letty returned to the kitchen and her unfinished task of putting away the breakfast things. Winny continued her work in silence, thinking the while of the strangely-interesting blind girl, and wishing to know something more about her, yet unwilling to question Letty on the subject. But Letty, judging others by herself, said abruptly:

"Now, I guess you want to know all about that 'ere girl, don't you?" Winny started and blushed slightly. "There, I knew it—there a'nt any use denying it, so I'll tell you. She's a girl of the name

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of Peggy Daly, and she lives with a sister of hers, a
Mrs. Brady."

"What! the wife of one Barney Brady down in
Hope street, below?"

"Yes! that's the man, and so Peggy lives with
them, ever since she lost her eyesight by the means
of a bad cold she got not long after she came to
this here place. She's a famous knitter, is Peggy,
and our ladies found her out somehow and took
quite a liking to her. They keep her in work most
of the time, for when they have none themselves
they ask it from their friends, and so Peggy always
earns a little that makes her kind of independent.
To my sartin kno ledge she might have a home
here all her life, but somehow she'd rather stay at
her sister's. I tell you hat," said Letty, drawing
near Winny and letting her voice fall almost to a
whisper, "I guess she has some very pertiklar rea-
sons for staying there sooner than anywhere else—
howsomever, that's a secret, and I don't want to
pry into folk's private business."

If Winny had been able to look into Letty's heart
at that moment, she would have said "sour grapes,
Letty!" but as it was, she only said "nor I neither,
Letty!" and so the conversation dropped.

CHAPTER XII.

ABOUT a week after Winny had taken up her abode in the house of the Misses Coulter, Paul Bergen asked his wife when he was about to return to his work after dinner, whether she had a quarter-dollar.

"Well! I have," said Nora, with some hesitation, "but I'm afeard I'll hardly have enough to do us till Saturday night, so, unless you're badly in want of it, Paul, I'd rather not give it."

"Oh come, Nora!" said her husband, "hand it over here. There's a letter in the office for me with a quarter-dollar postage."

"A letter! my goodness, Paul! why didn't you tell me that at onst?—where can it be from?"

"From! why from Ireland, where else?—stir yourself, Nora, and get me the money, an' I'll call at the office now before I go back. It isn't *one* yet. I'll have it with me when I come home in the evenin'."

"Well! be sure an' come early, Paul, for I'll be on pins and needles till I hear what's in the letter, an' who it's from."

So Paul got the needful and went his ways. Nora went about the house all the long afternoon, and how

long it did seem!—going through her work with mechanical precision, but thinking ever on the letter in Paul's pocket, and wondering where on earth it could be from.

"With what a leaden and retarding weight
Does expectation load the wings of time!"

so every hour seemed the length of a day to poor Nora. When the children came home from school there was a sort of temporary diversion, for their mother had then somebody to whom she could talk on the engrossing subject, and their anxiety, or rather curiosity, was as strongly excited as her own. By this time evening came on, and the six o'clock chime rang merrily out from the thousand factories and work-yards of the great city, and then every minute seemed an hour. The children ran up the steps, now one, now another, anxiously "looking out for father," and Nora herself had been more than once to the door before the well-known step was heard without. Patsey and Jim ran to catch each a hand of their father, and thus conducted he entered the cellar. Nora looked at him with an eager, searching glance, but Paul only laughed, and told Patsey to go off for Andy Dwyer. "He'll be at his supper now likely, but tell him to come as soon as ever he's done. Well, Nora!" he added, gaily, "have you my supper ready?"

"Yes, yes, Paul, it's just ready," and laying the baby on Jane's knee, she proceeded to place it on the table; "but what about the letter?"

XII.

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"The letter," said Paul, with affected forgetfulness; "oh! to be sure! I was forgettin' all about it. Now who do you think it's from, of all people in the world?"

Nora guessed and guessed, but Paul still laughed and shook his head: "You're out again, Nora. I see you're a poor hand at guessin', so I'll not keep you any longer in suspense. Do you mind my brother Felix that came out here to America three or four years afore we were married?"

"Lord bless me! to be sure I do!" cried Nora, all over in a tremble, as she afterwards said, "what about him, Paul?"

"Why, nothing in the world only that this letter in my hand is from him."

"An' where on earth is he?—many an' many's the day we watched for some account of him, I'm sare, an' when times were worst with us too. Myself was often an' often thinkin' that he'd turn up some day an' give us a lift. An' so he's alive an' well, you say?"

"I didn't say a word of the kind," said Paul, laughing, "but it's true enough for all that."

"An' where is he, at all, that we could never make him out? Sure yourself was afeard that he wamn't above ground this many a year!"

"He is, then, above ground, thanks be to God! an' where do you think he is?"

"Oh! you know there's no use in me tryin' to guess."

"Well! he's out in the very place that Con O'Regan is goin' to."

"Why, then, Paul! is it in earnest you are? Don't be schemin' on us now!"

"It's truth I tell you, Nora, an' you'll see it is when you hear the letter. He was workin' here an' there in different places for five or six years after he came out, an' by the same token, he wrote a good many letters, but you see we never got them because I was out here an' he didn't know it, an' kept writin' home for a couple of years, an' could get no answer, till he began to give us all up for dead. Well! at last he went to St. Louis, a great city out in them parts, an' worked there a start, till he came to hear of this fine new country where it was so easy to get land, an' as soon as he could put enough together—an' it was easy for him, bekase he had no family only himself an' his wife—he married Judy Lenihan, you know, the summer before he left home, an' so off they set for Iowa—I b'lieve that's what they call it—an' they got a fine farm there not many miles from a town they call Du——, Du——. Oh! then, haven't I the bad memory!" Taking out the letter, he searched and searched till he found the name—"well! sure enough, it's a quare name, too." After some spelling he made out the word *Dubuque*, though we will not answer for the correctness of Paul's pronunciation, at his nearest approach to the word. However, that was of as small importance in Paul's estimation as it was in that of his wife, who

said, with nervous impatience: "Oh! then, never mind the name—go on an' tell us the rest."

"Not a word more you'll hear now till I finish my supper, Nora," said Paul, in his blithesome way.

"Indeed, then, you're right enough, Paul," said Nora; "you're not in a good way of talkin' or readin' till you get your supper. Sit down, children, an' fall to, till we get these things out of the way." The children were quite willing to obey, and took their seats with commendable alacrity. Supper was more welcome even than the letter.

As for Nora she could think or talk of nothing else. Her joy was so great that she could eat little or nothing, and her appetite vanished entirely when Paul said, with a knowing smile:

"You're in great glee now, Nora, but you'll be in greater, by and by."

"Why, how is that, Paul?"

"You haven't heard the best news yet—that's all!"

What Nora would have replied in the pleasurable excitement of the moment it is hard to say, for her answer was prevented by the entrance of Andy Dwyer, with a "God save all here!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Paul; "I think you're a bit of a prophet, Andy. You talk as if we were all among ourselves again, with nobody to make game of us for the good old ways an' words that came down to us from them that went afore us."

"Well! I always speak so, Paul," replied Andy, "when I see that the coast is clear, and none of the

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ed, with a heavy sigh, "there's some of our own just
as bad as any of them in regard to making fun of
old usages that they ought to respect. Ah! Paul!
Paul! they live among the Moabites and the Am-
monites, till they get to be just like them."

"Who did you say they're among?" said Paul,
and Nora opened her eyes wide.

"Oh! I forgot," said Andy, with a grave smile,
"that you were not quite so familiar with the Scrip-
tures as some people are," meaning himself, of course.
So he went on with an air of grave condescension
to explain who the Ammonites and Moabites were,
and the relation in which they stood to the chosen
people. The analogy was so plain that Paul under-
stood it at once and cheerfully subscribed to its
truth.

"Well! Andy, you'll be glad to hear that some
of us are in a fair way of gettin' our necks out of
the halter; there's a letter I got the day from a
brother of mine that I haven't seen or heard from
this many a long year. Just sit over to the light
here an' read it out, for Nora hasn't heard it yet."

With many expressions of satisfaction Andy
opened the letter and read. The contents are
already known in great part to the reader, and the
concluding paragraphs ran as follows: "So now that
I have told you all about my own affairs, let us have
a word or two about yours. I suppose you have a
family rising up by this time, and unless you're in

some very good business, the city is a poor enough place to live in. I know very well what it is, for, one way and another, I've had a trial of town as well as country. Now I'll tell you what I want you to do. Write to me as soon as possible, and let me know how you are situated, and if yourself and your wife would wish to come out here. If you are both willing, I'll go at once and buy the location-ticket of a farm as near my own as I can get it, so that when you come here you'll have nothing in the world to do but go to work at once and build a house—it needn't be very large at first—and as my farm is pretty well cultivated now, I'll be able, with God's help, to give you a hand, myself and some boys from our own place that's settled in the neighborhood. They all bid me say that they'll do what they can to help you along and give you a start. Let me know if you have means enough to bring your wife and family out, and if not, why Judy and me have something by us in hard cash, that you can have the loan of for some years till you're in a way of paying it back. As Judy often says to me: There's only the two of us in it now, and it's together we ought to be, not you at one end of the world and me at the other, as a body might say. Judy and me haven't got any family of our own, and, please God, we'll help to do for yours. We want to know how many youngsters you have, what age they are, and all about them. If there's any from the old sod living near you that may chance

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to remember poor Felix, (and a wild scamp I was, too, God knows!) give them my kind love, and tell them the best I can wish them is that they may find their way out here. This is the place, Paul, to make a good home for one's family, where a man can be his own master, and not be driven about like black niggers from post to pillar, at the bidding of them that don't care a *tranceen* for one of us, but would see us far enough if the truth was known. And what's your poor dollar a day, or dollar and a quarter?—what is it, Paul, to support a family where you have everything to buy except the light of heaven, that they can't keep from you?—and if sickness comes on you, or death, how is it to be then?—who's to do for the wife and children?—and worse than all, the bad example that's before your eyes and your children's eyes, turn which way you will. Take my advice, Paul, and don't stay in such a place, except you have a good way of doing, as I said before. If you have, why it would be foolish to give it up, for a bird in the hand, you know, is always worth two in the bush.

"At any rate, write soon, and let us know what you mean to do. Judy sends her kind love to you all, and hopes to see you here, young and old, before she's many months older.

"So no more at present, but remains till death your loving and affectionate brother,

"FELIX BURNETT."

Then followed directions as to how the letter was to be addressed.

During the reading of this epistle Nora Bergen sat with her clasped hands resting on her knees and her eyes fixed on the precious missive which bore such cheering words. By the time it was ended, from date to subscription, the tears were coursing down her cheeks, tears of joy and gladness.

"Now, Paul," said she, "wasn't it true for Con O'Regan that we don't any of us know what may be in store for us?—oh! then, the Lord in Heaven be praised—haven't we the great luck entirely!—isn't Felix the good brother all out—an' his wife, too, not a bit behind himself—surs enough, but we're in great luck!"

"Well, Andy!" said Paul, as Dwyer handed him back the letter, "what do you think of that?"

"What *can* I think of it, Paul, only that you are one of the luckiest men that ever bore your name! Wonderful, indeed, are the ways of God!" He was evidently pleased at the sudden change in Paul's prospects, but still he could not help sighing as he said within himself: "There's nobody to send for me, or help me out of poverty!—they're low in the dust that would give *me* a helping hand. Well! I suppose it's all for the best—it *must* be, since God ordains it so!"

"Well! well!" said Paul, "how little notion I had of any such chance when I was tellin' Con the

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other day that I wished I could go with him. *Now*,
that same may come to pass, an', indeed, it's little
short of a miracle. Well! now what about writin'
the letter?"

"I'll write it for you if you wish," said Andy.

"I'm entirely obliged to you, Andy," returned
Paul, "but I know poor Felix would be better
pleased to see my own handwrite, such as it is. To
be sure, I can't either write or state* a letter like
you, but still, it's to my brother, you know, an' he'll
not turn up his nose at what *I* write, let it be
ever so indifferent."

"Well! I believe you're right," said Andy, ris-
ing; "a scroll from your own pen will be worth
gold in *his* eyes. God spare you to each other, and
to the two decent women that own you!"

"But sure you're not goin' yet?" said Nora;
"why, man, we have ever so many things to talk
about."

Just then there was a knock at the door, and
Nora's cordial "come in!" was answered by the
appearance of Con O'Regan, muffled in a good
warm overcoat. Glancing from one to the other he
quickly perceived that there was joy in the house,
of some kind, and he was about to remark: "Why
you all seem very merry here!" when he was anti-
cipated by Patsey and Jane, who cried out in a
breath:

"Oh, Con! sure we got a letter from my uncle

* Compose, or indite.

that was dead this long time, an' he sent for father and mother an' all of us to go to him. An' it's the same place that you're goin' to."

Con turned inquiringly to the seniors, and found on every face a confirmation of "the wondrous tale."

Paul nodded assentingly, and Nora cried out in the excess of her joy: "Praises be to God, it's all true enough, Con! Ask Andy Dwyer!—he read the letter!"

"It's all true, Cornelius," said Andy, with his grave smile, "except that Felix Bergen didn't come to life again, as the children would lead you to suppose. There wasn't a dead drop in him any day these fifteen years!"

"Oh! then, bad cess to you, Andy," said Nora, with a merry laugh, "it's you that's never without your joke. Sit down now, both of you, till we have our talk out—you'll not stir a step this hour, Andy!"

"Well! if I must, I must!" said Andy; "there's no use contesting the point with one of the fair sex. And how is Winifred, Cornelius?"

Con hesitated for a moment. He was not accustomed to hear Winny's name given in full, but a moment's thought recalled the fact that she *had* been so baptized, and he hastened to reply:

"I haven't seen her since she went to Miss Coulter's, for somehow I don't like to be troublin' a strange house very often. She was well, though, when I saw her a week ago. But I want to hear all about this lucky letter, Paul?"

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The letter was read over again for Con, to whom its contents were almost as welcome as they were to Paul and Nora. "Nora," said he, "we'll be all together, please the Lord, for I'll not go till you're ready, and glad I am to *have* to wait for you."

"Well! I'll write to Felix, God willing, this very night," said Paul, "before I lay a side on a bed. Run out, Patsey, an' get me a sheet of good letter paper—mind now an' get it good, for it's to send to your Uncle Felix."

Con and Andy now took their leave, the former being reminded by Mrs. Bergen to be sure and let Winny know all about the letter.

"Oh! I'll do that, never fear! I intended to go to see her to-morrow evening, an' I'll be all the welcomer with such news as this. Good night!"

"Good night, and God bless you!" said Nora, while Paul went with them to the top of the steps, telling them to take care of themselves, for the night was dark. "An' with all the lamps that there is," he added, "there's many a dark hole an' corner here an' there where bad doings are carried on at all hours of the night. So mind yourselves now!"

"We will," said Con, "an' thank you kindly for your advice, Paul, but it's little use our minding would be if God did not mind us, too!"

"True for you, Cornelius!" said Andy, as they walked away side by side; "the protection of God is everything, and any one that looks for it in earnest has little to fear. It is written in the Holy

Book : 'He is our helper and our deliverer, whom shall we fear ?'

"What a power of Scripture you have, Andy," said Con, in a respectful tone; "it must have taken you a long time to larn all you know!"

"Well, it did, Cornelius," said Andy, with a smothered sigh; "it *did* take me a long time, sure enough—as long, I think, as it takes many a one to make a fortune. And what am I the better for it all now?—if I knew less, I think my burden wouldn't be so heavy as it is!—howsomever, it may all come in useful some day. God has His own wise ways of working, and He'll do with us what He thinks best. Blessed be His name! But now, Cornelius!" he added, drawing nearer his companion, and lowering his voice, "talking of learning brings something into my mind that troubles me a good deal, and often keeps me awake thinking when all the world's asleep. I have a litle family growing up around me, and it's no easy matter to get them schooled in a place like this, where there's not a school that a Christian can send his child to!—it's true I'm able enough to teach them myself, but a poor laboring man coming home after his day's work has little heart for beginning to teach three or four children. Still, it's a hard thing to send them to where they're sure to learn more of evil than of good. If I could help it, no child of mine should ever set foot in one of them Common Schools."

"And why, if you please, Andy?" asked Con, in

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Andy?" asked Con, in

the same respectful tone. "What sort of schools
are they?"

"Why, they're neither more nor less than infidel
schools—heathen schools, Cornelius! if you under-
stand that better, where children are taught every-
thing but religion. They may do well enough for
Protestants of all sorts, but for Catholics they're
ruin, Cornelius! ruin and destruction. I've been
here off and on now for some years, and I tell you
I've seen enough of sending Catholic children to
those State Schools, as they call them, and for the
matter of that, they might be called the Devil's
Schools, as far as Catholics are concerned. That's
God's truth, Cornelius! and I tell it to you as a sen-
sible young man that knows the value of faith!"

Andy had now reached his own door, and was
about to raise the latch when Con said, "What in
the world is this, Andy?—just wait a minute, for
God's sake!"

"Who are they?" whispered Andy, as they ap-
proached two men who were wrangling at a little
distance. "Why, one of them is Tom Derragh—
sure enough it is—well! well! isn't he the graceless
vagabond?"

"An' the other is Larry Tierney!" said Con;
"don't you think so, Andy?"

"Well no!—but stay!—why, I declare to my
goodness, it is just Larry Tierney, my next door
neighbor. Oh then! oh then! isn't this too bad—
isn't it, now?"

As yet no blows had been struck on either side so that there was still a chance of preventing mischief, and while Con took Tom Derragh in charge, Andy applied himself to pacify Tierney. They had both worked themselves up to such a state of excitement that it was no easy task to keep them asunder.

"Let me at him!" shouted Tom, struggling to disengage himself from the sinewy grasp of Con; "he called me a lazy, idle vagabone, and by —," swearing an awful oath, "I'll pound him into mummy!—the low-lived, mean spirited dog!—I don't hang around the taverns as he does from nightfall to bed-time, lookin' for a chance to guzzle down the drink at some fool's expense!—let me at him, I say, or I'll give it to you, too!"

"Just listen to me now!" said Con, soothingly; 'come into Andy Dwyer's here both of you till you cool down a little. You'll be sorry for this when you're sober!"

"Sober?" hiccupped Tom; "who says I'm not sober now!—keep a civil tongue in your head, Con O'Regan, or I'll thrash you as I done many a time before."

Andy on his side had equally hard work to keep Tierney from flying at Tom, and there was every prospect of the watch being on the spot presently, for a crowd was beginning to gather. When all failed him, Con whispered in Tom's ear: "Take care, Tom, or I'll go and tell Father Timlin! I'll

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have him here in a minute if you don't stop your
nonsense and come into the house!"

Instead of quieting Derragh, this unfortunate threat
only served to increase his rage. "Father Timlin!"
he cried, turning fiercely on Con, "and what if he
were here now? Let him mind his own business.
He a'nt in Ireland now, I guess! Ha! Tierney,
you dog! I'm at you!" and Con being really some-
what exhausted by his previous exertions, could
not have held him much longer, but just then a
lucky thought came into his mind, and he whis-
pered again in Derragh's ear:

"And Peggy!—what will *she* say when she hears
of this, and that you're in the station-house all night
to-night, as you will be in two minutes, for there's
the watch coming. For God's sake come in before
you're taken!"

The mention of Peggy's name had a magical effect
on the besotted brain of Derragh. In an instant he
calmed down, saying

"You're right, Con!—what *would* she say, poor
unfortunate girl? I'll go anywhere you like, Con!
I will, indeed! Let that drunken scoundrel go to
the devil if he likes!—I wouldn't dirty my fingers
with him!"

Fortunately this was said in a low voice, so that
it did not reach the ears of the person so courte-
ously apostrophised, and Andy, who had also seen
the watch coming, just then opened Tierney's door
and pushed him in, he struggling and vowing ven-

geance all the time, then went in after him and closed the door. At the same moment Con got his game safely bagged in Andy Dwyer's comfortable kitchen, to the great surprise of the good dame who was quietly sewing at a table near the window. Her children were all in bed, and she had been just beguiling the time with the loves of Lord Lovell and Lady Nancy Nell, as commemorated in an ancient and time-honored ballad learned in early childhood from well-beloved lips, long mouldering into dust. Many a sadly-pleasing memory arose before the placid mind of the singer connected with the words of the quaint, old ditty, and so she sat singing and sewing, and thinking and sighing, all in the quietest of ways, when the door was flung open, and in bounced Con with his tamed mastiff, the latter looking deplorably stupid, and not a little sullen.

"Goodness me!" said Mrs. Dwyer, getting over her fright somewhat, as she recognized Con, who had been there once before. "Goodness me! but you most frightened the life in me. Sit down, Con!—and who's this?—why, Tom Derragh, I declare! Andy's not in now, but I expect him every minute. It's newens for him, indeed, to be out so late."

This broad hint rather disconcerted Con; however, he resolved to leave all explanation for Andy himself, at a more fitting time, and muttered something about passing that way, and meeting with Tom Derragh at the door, and asked him in to see how they all were.

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"Much obliged to you!" said Mrs. Dwyer, in a very dry tone, as though she would have said: "I wish you had taken a more seasonable time for your visit."

Con felt himself in a very awkward position, and as for Tom he sat looking at the opposite wall with a vacant stare. He was evidently growing more and more stupid, under the influence of the heat. Now and then a few half-futtered words were heard coming from his throat with a hoarse guttural sound.

"I know very well, Mrs. Dwyer," said Con, in a low voice, "I know very well that you think it strange to see me in such company, but Mr. Dwyer will tell you how it all happened. Indeed, it's not my fault at all."

"Well! I am glad to hear that, anyhow," said Mrs. Dwyer, in the same under tone, "for I was afeard you were takin' up with bad company, an' that's the ruination of many a one, Con. But what could I think seein' you boultin' in on me at this hour of the night with such a companion as that? You know the old sayin' that there is where we both came from: 'Show me the company you keep and I'll tell you the sort of a person you are?' Oh dear me, Con, isn't that the sorrowful sight to see?" pointing to Tom, who was now fast asleep and snoring away for dear life, his head hanging on his chest; "isn't it as good as a sermon to look at that man, young an' strong, an' a clean likely fellow, too, if he'd only keep himself as he ought! Ooh!

och! but it's little business the likes of him has comin' to America, for dear knows, Con, it takes hard, close savin' an' the best of good conduct to bring people through in it. But here's Andy comin', I think."

The door opened and Dwyer entered, casting an anxious glance around to see that there was no disturbance. All was quiet, however, and the worthy man breathed more freely, for he hated quarrelling, he used to say, as he hated the devil, the Lord pardon him for mentioning his name. With a heavy sigh and a sorrowful shake of the head he passed the unconscious Derragh and took his seat by Con, whose hand he warmly skook. "Well, Cornelius," said he, "I'm sfire you're as well pleased as I am that we had the good luck to come up when we did. If we hadn't, there would have been another disgraceful scene in the Police Court to-morrow, and these two poor witless creatures would have been either fined or clapped into jail for a start."

Mrs. Dwyer expressed her desire to know what had happened, and when she had heard all, she, reached her hand to Con with a benevolent smile saying.

"I hope you will forgive me for the wrong I done you in my own mind when you first came in!"

Con assured her that there was no need of any apology, as her suspicions were quite natural. It was then arranged that a bed should be made on the floor for Tom, who was not in a condition to go out, and Con bade his kind friends "good night."

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CHAPTER XIII.

ABOUT seven o'clock on the following evening Con O'Regan was at Miss Coulter's door, and his modest summons was answered by Letty, who, on seeing him by the light of the hall-lamp, exclaimed:

"Ah! I guess your Winny's brother, a'nt you?"

Con having answered in the affirmative was shown down stairs, where he found his sister hard at work finishing some article of under clothing for one of the ladies. Winny was a little cool at first, saying, in her quiet way:

"Ah, then, it's a wonder you came at all!—why didn't you stay a little longer?"

"Indeed, then, Winny, I'd have been here sooner—you know very well it wasn't my heart that hindered me, only I was a little timorous in regard of givin' trouble."

Winny smiled and was about to answer, but Letty took the word out of her mouth, as she said herself

"Never you mind that, Mister O'Regan——"

"Con, if you please."

"Well, then, Con, if that's what they call you—you may come to see Winny as often as you've a

mind to. The ladies han't any objection to your coming at any time. And now I think of it, they want to speak to you before you leave. I guess it's about that 'ere loan that you're to have, but, of course, I don't know. I never *want* to know anything about other folks' business."

Con looked at Winny and Winny smiled, but neither made any reply, so Letty resumed her ironing, and left the brother and sister to "have their talk." Having chatted over their own affairs for a little while, Con suddenly exclaimed: "Why, then, what sort of a memory have I at all—sure I was forgettin' all about the Bergens."

"Why, what about them, Con?" asked Winny, in visible trepidation.

"Oh! nothing but what you'll be glad to hear." He then proceeded to relate Paul's good luck of the previous day, which rejoiced Winny exceedingly, and they were both so intent on the pleasing theme, discussing it in every possible way, that they lost sight of Letty, who was not, it appeared, quite so oblivious of *their* presence—she had laid down her iron during Con's narrative, and broke in suddenly at the end with:

"Well now! if that a'nt what I call handsome!"

"What?" was the simultaneous question of brother and sister.

"Why, that 'ere man's doing so well for his brother, and he such an idle, drinking, good-for-nothing feller."

"Who are you talkin' of, Letty?" said Winny, quickly.

"Why, of that Paul Bergen as got the letter."

"Well! I didn't think you knew him," observed Winny, with a sly glance at her brother, "but, at any rate, he's not the man you take him for. He used to take a drop too much now and then, but that's all past away. For the last three or four months he hasn't tasted anything of the kind to my knowledge."

"Oh! of course I don't know anything about the man only as I heard Peggy Daly say. If he's sober now, why all the better; it's nothing to me, you know!"

"So, I suppose, Con, you'll be all going together in the spring—and that's not far off now," added Winny, with a heavy sigh. "Maybe there might be some more going, too."

"Well! I don't know as to that," said Con, "but I wish there may. Father Timlin says if there was a few of us going together it'd be so much the better. I wonder," and he lowered his voice almost to a whisper, "I wonder when will the old ladies advance the money? I'm told there are some little things that I had best take from here."

The ironing was again suspended. Letty's quick ear caught the tenor of the discourse, if not the precise words. "Oh! as to that," said she, "you can have the money whenever you want to. But han't you got any of your own?—why! la me! you ought

to have—how, on earth, can you spend all you earn?"

This startling question brought the blood to Con's cheek, and he again looked at Winny, who hastened to reply: "My brother has a little of his own, Letty, an' he might have more only for *my* long sickness. He left himself bare then."

"Now, I declare, Winny, it's a shame for you to talk that way," said Con, almost angrily. "Don't you know very well that I was only payin' you back a little of what you sent us home ever so many times."

"Well! well! never mind," said his sister, laughing, "just keep your temper an' your seat a little longer," for he had jumped to his feet. "Weren't you sayin' something awhile ago about Tom Derragh?"

"Tom Derragh!" repeated Letty, taking up the word; "why, that's Peggy's Tom, a'n't he?—a regular scapegrace that feller is, and I can't make out why Peggy holds on to him so!—has anything happened to him?"

Con evaded the question as best he might, observing that he was not much acquainted with the young man, and knew very little about him. Winny took the hint, and made no further inquiries on the subject. Con then reminded Letty that the ladies wanted to see him, and bidding Winny a kind "good night," was speedily ushered into the dining-room.

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above, Winny calling out to him as he ascended the stairs in Letty's wake:

"Tell Mrs. Bergen I'll be down to see her on Sunday afternoon."

"I will," said Con, "and mind you don't forget, for I'll be there, too."

He had now reached the dining-room door, where he paused to smooth down his hair and give his shoes an extra wipe, which he did with some hesitation and more reluctance, owing to the beauty of the soft, downy mat.

"Good evening, Con!" said Miss Coulter, and "good evening, Con!" said Miss Debby, as they raised their eyes from the chess-board before them, to fix a smiling look on Winny's brother and "Sammy's" favorite *protege*. Con answered only with a very low bow, which he tried hard to make as respectful as possible.

"Well, Con!" said the elder lady, "my sister and I are glad to see you. You must come often to see Winny. She is a very good girl—very good indeed. Mrs. Coulter did not know her value. But we do, and so does Letty."

"Yes, that I do," said the person mentioned, answering from behind Con, to the great surprise of the latter, who thought she had returned to the kitchen. But no such thing, she had discovered something out of its place, and, of course, there was no time like the present for putting it to rights.

"Yes, that I do," repeated Letty; "Winny a'nt

one bit like what folks say of the Irish. She's a real nice, tidy girl, and gives no more trouble in the house since she's bin here than a child. I like Winny, I do, and I a'nt pleased with Mrs. Coulter for treating her so!—I a'nt!"

Letty spoke as a privileged servant, well knowing with whom she had to deal, and though the ladies administered a faint rebuke in the form of a "fie! fie! Letty!—don't speak so, child!" the smile which accompanied the words belied their import. So Letty nodded, and said, "I a'nt saying but what's true," and went on with her dusting and arranging at the sideboard.

"But what about the money, Con?" said Miss Coulter, kindly; "a'nt you beginning to think of going yet?"

"Not for a month or so, Miss!" said Con, "but I'm gettin' my clothes an' things in readiness."

"Is there any prospect of your having company on the way?"

"Why, my stars, yes!" said Letty, before Con could get out a word. "There's Paul something—Paul—Paul Berrington—a great friend of Con's and Winny's. He's just got a letter from his brother out in Iowa to go there right off, so he'll be with Con all the way. A sober man he is, too, though he wasn't always so. My sakes! it's a first-rate chance for Con—a'nt it?"

"I am very glad to hear it," said each sister in turn, "and so will Sammy be, too."

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"I haven't seen Mr. Coulter yet, Miss, to tell him,
but I know he'll be well pleased, for he was sayin'
to me the other day that he hoped there would be
some others goin', because it 'id be a lonesome thing
to go such a long ways by one's self."

"Well, Con, you can have the loan we promised
you at any time. Brother and you can arrange all
about the payment. Would you wish to have it to-
morrow or next day?"

"Oh no! Miss," said Con, hastily, "not so soon,
if you please! I'd be frettin' the life out of me, if I
had it, for fear of anything happenin' it, an' then I'd
be done for entirely. I have enough, thank God, to
get what little things I want, an' I'll not trouble you
till I'm just ready to go."

"Very good, Con! I see you are prudent, as well
as faithful. Well! that was all we had to say, so
you can go now!"

"And mind you come often to see Winny!"
added Miss Debby, as she began to arrange the
board for another game.

"Oh! there's no fear of me forgettin' that, ladies,
when you're so good as to give me leave. May the
Lord bless you, both now and for ever!"

"Letty! show Con to the door, will you?" said
the elder sister; then, as they prepared to commence
their game, she added in a dreamy, musing tone,
"what a singular way these Irish have of blessing
one at every turn!—a'nt it queer?"

"Well, it is," returned Debby, "but it comes from

their goodness of heart, I dare say. They mean well, you know, and we must overlook any little error of judgment when the heart is all right. Dear Mr. Shillingworth will have it that this practice of the Irish is a most profane one, but, oh, dear! I can't think so! They always mention the name of God with respect, and so I can't see how they profane it by praying Him to bless folks. The custom may be idle and profitless, Dolly, but it cannot be profane!"

Having reached this sage conclusion, Miss Debby dismissed the subject from her thoughts and applied herself heart and soul to the game. As for Letty, she made all haste down to the kitchen, to unburthen her busy, restless mind. Her good will towards Winny was not confined to mere idle talk, although that was never wanting. Letty's heart was a good one, as times go.

"So your brother will be starting in about a month," said she, "and I guess he'll need some things made, won't he?—well, I've just bin a thinking that you can make anything he wants in the way of shirts, or the like, after hours. Miss Coulter never wants you to work, you know, after seven, or thereabouts. So, jest git the cotton and things to-morrow, and I'll be real glad to give you a hand evenings when I've my work done up."

"God bless you, Letty!" said Winny, fervently, "I'm sure I can never forget your kindness, and I'll pray for you the longest day I have to live, for

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starting in about a mess he'll need some, I've just bin a think- thing he wants in the hours. Miss Coulter know, after seven, or cotton and things to- to give you a hand done up."

said Winny, fervently, your kindness, and I'll ay I have to live, for

you've been all as one as a sister to me ever since I came here!"

"Well! I must say I'll be right glad to have you remember me," and Letty laughed merrily, "but as for that 'ere praying, I kinder think it a'nt much use, so you needn't trouble yourself praying for *me*. I guess you've got enough to pray for already."

"Oh! Letty, Letty! don't talk that way!—don't now, Letty, for it grieves my heart to hear you, an' you so good an' kind to me!"

Letty only laughed again, but she was not insensible to Winny's evident distress, so she hastened to soothe her with: "Well! I won't then, if you feel so dreadful bad about it. But, my sakes! where's the use of a body making believe? I don't think your prayers, or any other one's prayers can do me any good—the Lord will give me just what He has a mind to, whether you ask Him or not. That's my notion, you see, and there a'nt any good that I can see in my telling you a different story. Now, a'nt that true?"

"Well! I suppose so," said Winny, in a dejected tone; then she added within herself, "there's no use strugglin' against the stream. God pity her, poor creature! she's as blind as a bat!"

A few minutes and the whole was forgotten by Letty, who took up her sewing and commenced humming a popular negro melody, with the air of one who had not a care or sorrow in the world. Her fresh Milesian face was seldom darkened by a

cloud, and as she sat there carolling her inspiring lay, it seemed happier and more joyous even than its wont. Winny sighed as she looked, for Letty's happiness was that of the good-natured, upright heathen, well pleased with self and with all the world, a fact which was plainly discernible to the eye of faith.

On the following evening when Paul Bergen came home from his work, he found his little household all in confusion, and Nora met him at the door with a half-crazed look and manner. "Run off down the street, Paul!" she cried, "an see if you'll see Patsey!"

"Patsey! why, isn't he here?"

"No, nor wasn't since he went to school in the afternoon. Oh! God help us! God help us!" she cried, wringing her hands, and bursting into tears, "maybe it's brought home to us like Peter he'll be."

Paul waited to hear no more. With the dread experience of the past before him, he had reason to fear the very worst, and he ran, like a madman, to Andy Dwyer's hoping that Patsey might be there. But instead of that he found Mrs. Dwyer nearly as wild as Nora, for her eldest boy was missing, too.

"Lord save us!" cried Paul, "where can they be?—still an' all, Mrs. Dwyer, my mind's a little easier now, for as sure as anything, they're together, wherever they are. I suppose Andy's not home yet?"

"No, but I expect him every minnit. But go, for God's sake!—there's no time to be lost!"

Paul had no intention to wait, and he turned away to commence his vague search, not knowing where to go or what to do. Had he but the slightest clue to lead him on, he would have followed to the death, but to begin to seek two missing urchins in a city like that, was literally a hopeless task.

"I might as well look for a needle in a bundle of straw!" said Paul; "but still I must do something. God direct me where to go!" So, taking heart of grace, he went in turn to the dwelling of each of his acquaintances within a circuit of several streets, but no Patsey was to be found. Sick at heart, faint from long fasting after the hard labor of the afternoon, and almost despairing of ever finding his boy alive, he at length turned his steps homeward, and reached his own door almost exhausted. All at once he stopped—he heard his wife's voice speaking in a loud, excited tone, and the terrible thought struck him that Patsey had been brought home—perhaps a corpse. "That's it," said he; "he's either killed or badly hurt, an' the poor heart-broken woman's gone crazed." His heart sank within him and he leaned against the door for support.

"Well! I suppose I may as well go in at any rate!" and he went in accordingly, much quicker, too, than he intended, for the door having been but partially fastened, gave way before the pressure of his weight, and he would have gone in head foremost had not his fall been broken by the goodly bulk of Andy Dwyer, who fortunately stood near the door at that

particular moment. Paul's apology was cut short by the welcome apparition of Patsey, who sat munching a huge slice of bread and butter at the opposite side of the room.

"The Lord be praised!" was Paul's first exclamation; "so he's alive an' well after all." And the poor man sinking into a seat, was unable to utter another word. His eyes wandered from Patsey to Nora, who stood brandishing a rod in front of the young culprit, the latter regarding her and it with infinite coolness and self-possession. Andy Dwyer heaved a deep sigh just at Paul's elbow.

"Ah! Paul, Paul!" said he, "this is a bad business!"

"What is?" demanded Paul; "sure it isn't as bad as we expected, after all."

"Isn't it, indeed?" cried Nora, turning almost fiercely on her husband; "an' what do you think of that young vagabond there squaring himself at me when I took the rod to whip him? I was so glad to see him at first that I run an' give him a piece of bread, the young rascal! but when I began to question him about where he was, an' couldn't get any satisfaction from him, I took down the rod, an' threatened to give him a good floggin' if he didn't tell me what he was about all the afternoon. But sure it's what he began to laugh at me, an' made a motion as if he'd strike me. Andy Dwyer there can tell you that as well as I can."

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Andy was silent, but he shook his head and heaved another sigh still deeper than the first.

"Very good!" said Paul, nodding at Patsey, who began, by this time, to look rather blank; "very good, my lad!—I'll settle with you, by and by! I'll give you such a thrashin' that you'll mind it the longest day you have to live—I'll go bail for it you'll never turn hand or tongue on your mother for the time to come!—make haste an' finish that bread you're eatin'."

Patsey began to blubber, and somehow instead of making haste to swallow the last of the bread, the masticatory process went on slower than ever. It was obstructed, too, of course accidentally, by divers convulsive motions in the throat, as though Patsey's breath was growing very short indeed. Ever and anon he cast a furtive glance on his father, who had now taken possession of the rod. Andy turned away to hide a smile.

"Make haste, I tell you!" repeated Paul; "but, that's true, Nora," turning to his wife, "did the young rap tell you where he was?"

"Not a word I could get out of him," said the poor mother. "I tell you again it's what he laughed at me."

"Was your boy with him, Andy?" demanded Paul.

"Yes, yes, the fellow walked in to us just as his mother was telling me in a great fright about him being away. I had a good deal of trouble to get

out of him where they were, but at last I made him tell. It seems they were part of the time playing with some other boys about the streets, but at last they got into a beer-cellar down here in Elm street, where there was a couple of darkies boxing for a wager, and, *of course*, nothing would serve my lads but they must wait to see the battle decided. But I think I gave Terence what will fix the beer-cellar and the darkies on his mind. If he ever forgets it, I'll be out in my reckoning, that's all."

"And, so that's where they were," said Paul, "while I was runnin' here and there, from post to pillar, in search of them, till I was just ready to drop with the weakness an' the fear that was on me. So it was lookin' at two darkies boxin' you were, my lad——"

"Yes, father," said Patsey, brightening up at the recollection, "and I guess you'd like to have seen it yourself if you had the chance. Don't you mind when you and Tom Derragh and all the rest used to be talking about how well you could box?—well I guess you never seed a handsomer spell than that was! I tell you the darkies pitched into each other first rate."

"Now, Paul!" cried Nora, "just listen to that vagabone!—I'm blest an' happy if he wasn't imitatin' the darkies when he squared an' shook his fists at *me* a while ago."

"No, I wan't, mother," said the young scape-grace, stoutly, "for it a'nt manly, folks say, to strike

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"Can't you, indeed?" said his father. "Can you
stand *this*, then? and this? and this?" And suit-
ing the action to the word, he administered an extra
dose of the rod, applying it in a most effective man-
ner to a certain fleshy part of Patsey's little body,
bared expressly for the occasion. If piteous ories
and promises of amendment could have stayed the
avenging arm, the punishment would have been
light indeed, but Paul leant a deaf ear to both, nor
stopped till he had given Patsey what he considered
his due. Neither Nora nor Andy interfered, both
being well satisfied that he "deserved all he got,"
but Jane and Jim were vociferous in their petitions
for mercy, and promises that he'd "never do it
again." "Oh father! father! let him go now—he'll
never, never do it again!—sure you won't, Patsey?
Oh! mother! mother! won't you save him?"

"No, no, children!—I can't!—my heart aches to
see him gettin' such a beatin', but it's good for him,
Jane dear!—it's good for him!—he'd go to the devil
entirely, or be killed on us some day like poor Peter
if we let him go on any longer!"

At length, when Patsey was released with an in-
junction from his father to "be sure an' run away
again for an afternoon, an' get into a beer-cellar with
the darkies," Jane and Jim followed their brother
into the corner where he hid himself. Jane put her
arm round his neck, and Jim took hold of his hand,

crying all the time as though he had had his share of the correction. But Patsey was sullen and would not be comforted. To every kind, consoling word of Jane's, he only answered: "Never mind—when I'm a man they shan't use me so!—I'll go where I like, and do just as I've a mind to."

"Oh, Patsey!" whispered Jane, in terrified accents, "don't talk so—father will hear you!"

"I don't care if he do, Jane!—he needn't have used me so!—it a'n't any wonder that folks talk so of Irish Paddies!—they're real mean!"

Meanwhile, Paul and his wife were discussing in a low voice with Andy Dwyer the pernicious influence of bad example, as exemplified in the case before them. Paul and Nora were filled with gratitude for the great mercy of God in their regard, inasmuch as they were about to escape with their children from the polluted thoroughfares of the city, while Andy bemoaned the hard fate which chained him to the spot.

"However," said he, rising and taking his hat, "we must only do the best we can, and leave the rest to God. I suppose He'll make it all right in the end if we only do our duty wherever He places us. Patrick!" said he, addressing the dark-browed boy, "I hope this will be a useful lesson to you all your life, and that your father will never have to punish you so again. What could induce you to do such a thing?"

"Why, you see, Terry and me——"

"Terence, if you please, Patrick!"

"Well! you see, Terence and me and Job Easton and Bill Black were all playing marbles on the sidewalk, just along by that 'ere cellar-door, and we saw all the folks a-running in, and we ran like the rest to see what it was. And when we saw the darkies stripped, jest a-going to fight, says Terry to me, says he: 'Patsey, I guess we'll see it out.' And says I, 'all right,' so we staid till the fight was over, and that's all. I'm sure it wan't any great harm!"

"Not a word, now!" said his father, angrily; "not a word, or I'll give you another touch of the rod. I'll show you it *was* harm, and great harm, too!—go off to your bed, this minnit, and, Jane, see that he says his prayers. Make him say them out loud so that you'll be sure."

"Well, now, Andy!" said Mrs. Bergen, "aren't you in a great hurry? Can't you sit awhile, now that we've got a little peace?"

"Oh, no! I must be going, Mrs. Bergen. Poor Alice gets lonesome when I'm out too long. I tell you, Paul!" he added, lowering his voice to a whisper, "you have need to look after that same boy of yours. If you don't, mind my words, you'll have trouble with him! Don't take it ill of me to say so, either of you, but you know I'm rearing a family myself and I'd be thankful to any one that would tell me of their faults before it was too late."

"And we *are* thankful to you, Andy," said Paul, in the same tone, while Nora began to rock herself

to and fro, as was usual with her in any fresh accession of sorrow ; " we are thankful to you, Andy, for your good advice. Do you know I often thought the same myself, for there seems to be something very dark and very rough in Patsey above all the rest. Howsomever, if we only had him away from here we might get along better with him."

"That's my notion, too," said Andy, "but now I must wish you good night."

"Good night, Andy, an' safe home to you!"



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CHAPTER XIV.

For the first few weeks after Winny's departure, Mr. Coulter had a hard time of it. What with Winny's supposed ill-conduct and the shelter afforded her by the Misses Coulter, which was done through pure spite, as she alleged,—“for nothing in the world but to annoy *her*,”—Mrs. Coulter had acquired a fresh supply of ammunition wherewith she kept up a running fire on her husband as often as he placed himself within gunshot of her, which, to say the truth, was as seldom as possible. Now, it was nothing but the meanness and rascality of the Irish, the singular taste that some people had for having them about them; again, it was the mean spitefulness of old maids, who had nothing better to do than teasing and annoying their neighbors. As a general thing Mr. Coulter would listen in silence, answering only by an occasional “Humph,” or “Do tell, Prudence!” or some such exclamation; but once or twice he was so nettled by the contemptuous allusion to his sisters that he could not keep silence.

'Why, Prudence! my dear, you needn't turn up your nose so at old maids! I know somebody and so do you, too, that was very near being one herself—so near, indeed, that a year or two would have raised her to the dignity of the upper shelf, where she might have withered all her life 'on the virgin thorn,' if it hadn't been for somebody else that came along just in time. If *my* sisters are old maids, they wear their age respectably, so let me hear no more on that subject."

There was a singular energy and determination about Mr. Coulter on such occasions that his wife never dared to brave, so she was fain to suspend operations for a more favorable opportunity, and fall back upon a dignified silence.

But the attack was sure to be renewed very soon again, and Mr. Coulter, sick and tired of the everlasting topic, determined to make a bold effort on behalf of Winny's reputation, and to fathom the secret of the allegations brought against her, if mortal man could do it. Lest the reader might be disposed to give the old gentleman too much credit, we must admit that his desire to get rid of the unceasing taunts and insinuations of his wife had at least as much to do in his praiseworthy resolution, as his strict sense of justice, strengthened as it was by gratitude.

"If I can only get that old man off my back," said he, as he took a neatly-folded paper from his escutoire, "I'll be as happy as ever Sinbad was to get

rid of *his* burden. Now, Dr. Richards! my man, now comes the tug of war! I'll just step over to his office to pay him this bill which he sent me a couple of days ago, and I'll see if I can't get something out of him that may serve me against Prudence."

So bustling along in his quick, business-like way, he stepped into Dr. Richards' elegantly furnished office, where he happily found the doctor alone. The compliments of the morning being interchanged, the doctor laid down the daily paper which he had been "just glancing over," he said, on Mr. Coulter's taking out his pocket-book and handing over the bill to be receipted.

"There's the amount, doctor; I believe you'll find it correct."

"Quite so, Mr. Coulter," pocketing the roll of bills; "I'm much obliged to you."

"Not at all, doctor; not at all. I owe you more than money can pay for having restored my little Rachel to life when I thought her almost gone. Between you and Winny, you made a good job of it."

"Ah yes!—Winny!" repeated the doctor; "Winny is a good nurse, Mr. Coulter—a very good nurse, indeed. She could make a very good living out of that very thing, and I offered to recommend her to my patients, but she wouldn't hear of it, sir—wouldn't hear of it, at all. Strange enough, wasn't it?"

"Why, doctor," said Mr. Coulter, "I'm only sur-

prised at your making her such an offer—you that knew so much about her."

"Who—I?" said the doctor, in a startled tone; "I assure you, Mr. Coulter, I know nothing about the girl one way or the other, except what I saw of her in your house. Who said I did?"

"Why, my wife, Mrs. Prudence Coulter, did," returned the humorous old gentleman, with the coolest composure. "She made very serious allegation against poor Winny, and referred me to you as her authority. I have been very busy ever since, and the affair, I knew, could wait, so I gave myself no further trouble about it at the time; but now that I have a quiet opportunity of talking to you in private, I would thank you, doctor, to let me know exactly what you have to say against Winny."

At this the doctor winced a good deal, and his bold, glittering eye sank before the keen glance of his interrogator. A very faint blush, or something like it, mounted to his cheek, and he could only repeat in a dogged tone:

"Why, I have already told you, Mr. Coulter, that I have nothing to say to the girl. What should I know about such people unless they come before me in the way of business, and I assure you that is as seldom as I possibly can. It is my interest, sir, to keep clear of the Irish lest my practice should suffer if I were known to go much amongst them."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Coulter; "that is all very dignified, doctor, and very becoming in a fashionable

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physician, but it does not answer *my* question. What has Winny O'Regan done to you that you endeavor to blacken her character?—*Endeavor*, I say, doctor—mark the word! for I tell you there is no chance of your succeeding. Winny's character is beyond suspicion."

Here the doctor started to his feet and clenched his fist as though he would have struck the old gentleman who sat looking at him with such a provoking smile. "What has she done to me?" he cried, "the termagant, the vixen! what *could* she do to me?—no doubt she has been telling a plausible story about—about—pshaw! what a fool I am?" he added, pettishly, as he pushed his chair from him.

"Keep your seat, my dear sir!" said the provokingly calm Mr. Coulter; "I am not going just yet, though I hope I shall soon. Sit down, doctor, and let us talk the matter over in a quiet, friendly way. Now, you know, my dear sir, Winny is a very good-looking girl, and it is no great wonder if a fine rollicking young fellow like you should have been casting a stray glance that way now and then, in the tempting privacy of the sick-room. Don't blush, doctor, we are all of us mortal, and have little tender instincts planted within us, doubtless for a wise purpose. Now I see as plainly as can be that you and Winny had a little tiff—excuse the word, doctor, and, in the heat of the moment, you went and told Mrs. Coulter what you were sorry for when you cooled down. Now, doctor, don't you think I

can guess as well as any one if I only try. You have just been making some little experiments on Winny's virtue——"

"And so have you, at one time or another, I'll be sworn, my old chap!" said the doctor, losing his habitual caution.

"I deny it, sir," said Mr. Coulter, firmly and coldly, and he, too, stood up; "I was never addicted to such pursuits, and if I had been, Winny O'Regan would have been the last woman living I'd think of in any such way, for, Doctor Richards! there is that about Winny which would repel the advances of any but a hardened libertine. That girl, sir, is as pure, both in mind and body, as the drifting snow, and you know it as well as I do, if you'd only say so. Good morning, doctor!—good morning!"

The old gentleman bowed stiffly and was moving away when the doctor, recovering, all at once, his habitual presence of mind, hurried before him saying:

"Allow me, Mr. Coulter!" then added before he turned the handle, "I trust we are none the worse friends for what has passed, and I am sure you are too generous to seek to injure me in my practice by giving undue importance to a mere idle jest."

"Hum! jest, indeed!" repeated the other, snappishly—"a fine jest truly, and a harmless one—very!—let me pass, doctor—will you?"

"Well, but, Mr. Coulter, you will oblige me by saying nothing of what has passed between us!"

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"As far as Mrs. Coulter is concerned, I will make no such promise. Winny, too, must hear how the matter stands. As for any one else hearing of your little peccadilloes from me, you needn't fear, doctor—I have something else to mind besides retailing choice bits of scandal—I leave that to your *pious* folk, Doctor Richards. Good morning to you!—Excuse my trespassing on your time!" and with the same tantalizing smile on his thin puckered lips, and the same cool, keen irony in his full, manly tones, away hustled Mr. Coulter, leaving the doctor to his meditations, which were anything but agreeable in their nature at that particular juncture.

Mr. Coulter made it a point to be home early to dinner that day, so early, indeed, that Mrs. Coulter was taken quite aback, and thought it necessary to apologize. The dinner was not quite ready yet, that tiresome Eve was *so* slow. There was really no such thing as getting along with her.

Mr. Coulter, which was rather unusual with him, declared himself in no hurry, he could wait a little while, provided it were not too long. "As to Eve," said he, "she is one of your own choice, my dear, so I have nothing to say between you. When you *had* one who could put the dinner on the table precisely to the minute, without the slightest trouble to you, there was one fault and another constantly found out in her—faults that nobody saw but yourself,—you never stopped till you got rid of *her*. So pray let me hear no more complaints now!"

"Why, Samuel, how on earth *could* I put up with Winny, after hearing what I did of her?—you are really very unreasonable!"

"Not a bit of it, my good Prudence, not a bit of it. You ought to have known Winny better than to hearken to such slanderous stories against her. Did you ever *see* anything improper in her conduct or deportment?—eh, Prudence?"

"Well! of course, I can't say I ever did, but then Doctor Richards found out something, and you know there was no possibility of *his* being mistaken."

"Was there not, indeed?—I tell you, Prudence, whether he was mistaken, or whether he had taken some little pique against Winny, he trumped up the whole story out of his own imagination."

"Mr. Coulter!—you as-ton-ish me!—Doctor Richards a pique against Winny!—why, how on earth could you *think* of such a thing?"

"Because I have it from no less a person than the doctor himself, my dear!" said Mr. Coulter, with an exulting smile, and a nod to match, "that is to say, I fished the precious secret out of the miry pool where it lay in his heart—not with his will, Mrs Coulter, you may be sure. Are you *as-ton-ished* now, my dear?"

"Well, after that, nothing will ever astonish me again—nothing! But do tell me, Samuel! what you have discovered!"

"I will, if you promise to say nothing about it, for

I had to promise not to speak of it except to you and Winny."

Mr. Coulter well knew that such a promise was sure to be kept for fear of disgracing the conventicle which rejoiced in the membership of the worthy doctor. So, having received the promise, he repeated to his wife his previous conversation with Dr. Richards, and when she had heard all, she held up her hands in utter amazement.

"Well! I'm sure no one ever could have thought of such a thing! Dear me! I shall never like that Dr. Richards again!—though, after all, Samuel, we must not be too harsh in our judgment on an erring brother——"

"Brother me no brothers, Prudence!" cried her husband; "the man is no brother of mine, and never shall be, please the fate. I'd rather have a decent Hindoo for a brother!—I would, by Jupiter!"

Mr. Coulter seldom swore, but when he did, he took good care to make his oath as imposing as possible, without actually blaspheming the name of God, for which he had a certain degree of respect. "Now, Prudence!" said he; as his wife rang the bell to "hurry up" the dinner, "now, Prudence, my dear wife, I wish you to understand that Winny's reputation is clearly restored—you admit that fact—don't you?"

"Oh! of course—I know you never state a falsehood."

"Well, then!—that point is settled now and for

ever!—I am to hear no more of it!—remember that!"

"Why, Samuel! how you do talk! Surely, I cannot tell how the girl may conduct herself hereafter."

"That is not the question—we have only to deal with the past. Winny will trouble *you* no more, so let her rest in peace, as Catholics say of their dead. Now, then, for that savory soup of yours, Prudence." Peace thus proclaimed and duly established, the rich pea-soup was discussed with exquisite *gout*, Mr. Coulter observing as he handed back his plate for a fresh supply: "Rest in peace, indeed!—the peace of the grave is but a sorry peace after all. For my part, like honest Charley Lamb, 'I would set up my tabernacle here. I am in love with this green earth,' and have no hankering after the peace or happiness of that spirit-land of which men talk and write, just as though any of them had ever seen it. Pahaw! this smoking, juicy joint," and he plunged the fork into a tempting piece of roast beef, "is worth an hundred of those 'baseless fabrics,' which make up what is called 'revealed religion.' Still, they are all very well in their way, especially for those who have not much of the creature comforts here below. The poor people of Ireland, for instance—no wonder they have such faith in things unseen, for their lot here is weary enough."

Such was the usual course of Mr. Coulter's semi

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religious, semi-philosophic musings, spoken aloud on the present occasion under the influence of the good man's sensible satisfaction. His wife listened with more displeasure than surprise, contenting herself with a dissenting shake of the head, and a freezing "Fie, fie, Samuel! why *will* you talk so?" Then adroitly changed the subject to one of more immediate interest, namely, the steady improvement of Rachel's health, which had been at first rather precarious.

"But, Prudence!" said Mr. Coulter, as if with sudden recollection, "did I ever tell you that Con O'Regan is going out West in the spring?"

"Out West!—why, no!—how can *he* go out West?—what is he going to do there?"

Mr. Coulter laughed. "One question at a time, my dear, if *you* please."

"Well! but, Samuel, what *is* he going to do?"

"Why, to settle on a farm, to be sure?—what else would he do?"

Mrs. Coulter began to look very grave, and fixed a penetrating glance on her husband. "And the money?—how is *he* to get a farm anywhere? Farms a'n't got for nothing, I reckon."

"Sometimes they are, but Con don't need that. My sisters are going to advance him whatever sum is necessary till such time as he can repay it."

"Oh! your sisters!" said the lady, with a somewhat incredulous air; "that is always the excuse. A likely story, truly!"

"Prudence!" said the husband, with one of his sternest looks, "do you mean to doubt the truth of what I tell you?"

"Oh! of course I don't, Samuel. I should be very sorry, indeed; but, then, one cannot help thinking, you know, how exceedingly convenient it is to have sisters with such ample funds at their command!"

"It is certainly very convenient for my sisters themselves," said Mr. Coulter, sharply; "I should be sorry to see them without funds, as you say, depending on you or me, Prudence. May they never be reduced to that position! But let that pass—they are doing what I tell you for Con O'Regan, let their funds be as they may."

"And Winny? I suppose they are sending her, too?"

"Not exactly!—I dare say they are of opinion that Winny would find prairie-life rather hard for awhile. She remains with them till her brother's wife and children come out from Ireland, next year or so—then they will all go together."

"Well! I have only to observe," said Mrs. Coulter, as she rang her table-bell, "that your sisters are extremely free with their money. They should have been born Irish—they are so improvident."

"Why, Prudence! this from you! Can it be necessary to remind a chosen vessel of that heavenly treasury where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, &c.?"

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"Pshaw!—nonsense!" cried the wife, in a queru-
lous tone, detecting in her husband's unusually
solemn and measured accents the slightest possible
imitation of her favorite preacher. "There's a time
for all things. I don't profess to understand the
sayings or doings of eccentric persons, and I beg
you will say no more on the subject. I am not suf-
ficiently benevolent to be consulted in the very be-
nevolent whims of your good sisters. I shall mind
my own affairs—let them mind theirs."

"All right, Prudence! all right!—good-bye now
—I must be off!" and waiting to hear no more, the
old gentleman hurried to the hall in search of his
hat and overcoat, muttering to himself, as was his
wont: "Speculative charity is one thing, and opera-
tive charity another. I rather think the former is
the more fashionable amongst you all! Humph!—
eccentric, indeed!—I wish *you* had some of such ec-
centricity—just a *little* more of the milk that we all
wot of would do you no harm, my good lady!"

About the same time that Mr. Coulter was going
back to his office, little Patsey Bergen, on his way
to the afternoon school, overtook Terry Dwyer, not
far from the school-house door.

"Hillo, Dwyer! is this you?"

"Why, yes, I guess it is. Have you most got
over your whipping, Patsey?—father told me *you*
had a first-rate one. I don't know how you felt, but
I felt real sore, I tell you!"

"No matter how I felt," said Patsey, with a sud-

den change of manner," I a'nt going to have another whipping like that."

"Oh! I know—you'll be a good boy for the time to come."

"No, I won't—I'm blowed if I will!—but if ever father undertakes to use me so again, I'll——," he stopped.

"You'll what?" said the other, in breathless eagerness.

"I'll run away!—I will!—I'll clear out from them altogether."

"You will, eh?—and where will you go to?"

"Never *you* mind that, Terry—I'll go where they shan't find me. Jake Hampton told me that he ran away once 'case his father wouldn't give him any money, and after he was gone a week, he came right home again, and the old folk were ever so glad to see him, and ever sence he jest gits what money he wants and goes wherever he has a mind to."

Dwyer shook his head. "I wouldn't do it, if I were you, Patsey."

"There.—Patsey again. I a'nt a going to have folks call me so any longer."

"And what am I to call you?—*Patrick*, I suppose, because father says Patrick's a good name."

"No, it a'nt a good name!" said young Bergen, stoutly; "Patrick is just as bad as Patsey, and they're both the same as *Paddy*. Call me Bergen—not Patsey or Patrick. Don't you see how I call you *Dwyer* ever since yesterday, 'case Henry Clay

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Brown said Terry was a nasty Irish name, too, just like Paddy. Now mind, you call me Bergen, and I'll call you Dwyer—if I once got away from our folks I'd have others call me Jake or Jeff, or some such pretty name."

"Hush—h—h—!" cried young Dwyer, as he opened the door of their school-room—"come along in, Patsey!"

"Patsey!" repeated the little rebel, knitting his brows together.

"Oh, bother!—I meant Bergen!—come in quick—I guess we're late!"

When school was dismissed, Terry Dwyer, on gaining the street, looked round in search of his friend Patsey, but the latter was nowhere to be seen, and Terry was fain to hurry home, having a salutary fear of his father's muscular arm raised in punishment. He was jogging along home whistling "Dandy Jim from Caroline," then the most popular of melodies in all American cities, when out popped Patsey's curly head from an archway, and after it came *instantly* the burly little figure of the owner, accompanied by the identical Jake Hampton, whose example he had triumphantly cited in the morning. Hampton lounged away in another direction, leaving our young friends to "wend *their* homeward way" as they chose.

"Well, Bergen! what's in the wind now?" said Terry, with a knowing smile.

"Why, Jake has just been a-telling me as how *he*

wouldn't go to that far away place where unclie lives, if he were me. He says he's sure it's a rum sort of place, for he heard his old Uncle Ben say so. There's only buffaloes and Irishmen there, folka say, and if a boy wanted to run away he couldn't do it, nohow. It a'nt a bit like here, Jake says."

"Well! I don't know anything about it," said Dwyer, musingly, "but I guess you'd better go with your folks, wherever *they* go. At any rate, you'd better say nothing of the kind at home, or you'll catch it."

"Aha!" laughed Patsey, "I a'nt so green as that. I know a thing or two." And so, with a farewell nod, he turned a corner in the direction of his home.



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CHAPTER XV.

DURING all this time Paul Bergen and his wife were anxiously looking out for an answer from Felix, now fearing that he might change his mind, or that some untoward accident might occur to frustrate their cherished hopes, now endeavoring to anticipate the contents of the expected letter, and laying down plans for procuring the necessary outfit. Even the presents to be taken to Felix and his wife were not forgotten. Fearful of being led into temptation at so critical a juncture, Paul was most careful in avoiding all those whose company he had found dangerous in times past. Dances and raffles he gave up altogether, taking care, however, to give whatever he could afford at the time in aid of the charitable purpose for which either was got up. Many a sneer, and many a bitter taunt he had to encounter in the course of this long probation, but as he used to say to Nora, or Andy Dwyer: "It's myself that has the fine broad back to bear it all, and I can let them laugh as long as they like when my conscience tells me I'm in the right. 'They may

laugh that win,' is an old saying, and maybe I'll have the laugh in the long run. If Felix keeps in the same mind, an' sends for us as he promised, I can snap my fingers at them all."

Meanwhile, he had contrived, by the closest economy, to save some fifteen or twenty dollars, which was to "help with the outfit, if they were going in the spring, as, please God! they would."

Leaving them to enjoy the mingled hope and fear of their expectant state, let us see how Con O'Regan employed his time while waiting for the coming spring. He had obtained a situation as storeman in a wholesale liquor store not far from the new establishment of Coulter, Pims & Co., and, at first, he thought he had been very fortunate, inasmuch as most of the hands employed about "the concern" were countrymen of his own. It is true their manners and even their appearance were rather against the supposition, but then their names—why, surely, Tom Houlahan, and Phil Byrne, and Larry Smith, must be Irish, else how did they come by such patronymics? Yes! these three were certainly his own countrymen. That was very clear to Con, and he treated them from the first in quite an easy, familiar way, very different from the involuntary restraint which marked his intercourse with the others. After a few days, however, he became somewhat doubtful as to the "birth and breeding" of his companions with the old Celtic names. Their lineage was, of course, unmistakeable, but that was small com

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fort to Con. He found out, to his great mortifica-
tion, that Tom Houlahan laughed at all religion, and
made it his boast that he "did just as he had a mind
to, and didn't care a chaw of tobacco for priest or
minister." Every man, according to Tom, had a
right to live as well and as long as he could, and
as for a future state of reward or punishment,
that was "all a sham, intended by lying preachers
to get money out of folks' pockets nice and
slick." Such was Houlahan's creed. As for Smith
and Byrne, they had a sort of notion that they
ought to be Catholics, and would never make any
direct attack on the Papists or "Romanists" as
a body, which was quite common with Houlahan,
but still they never went the length of going to
Church, laughed at the idea of going to confession,
or depriving the body of any comfort for the good
of the soul. They, each of them, had one or other
parent living, and would admit that the "old man"
or "the old woman" went to Church, "and all that,"
but, as for themselves, that was quite another thing.
They were too tired after the week's work to get up
and go to Mass on Sunday mornings. They left that
for the old folk, who had nothing else to do but go
to Church and pray. As to the sacred obligations
of religion, they seemed to know little and care less.
This was all very new and very strange to Con, who,
gradually finding out his first mistake, began invol-
untarily to shrink into himself, and to observe his
companions with a sort of painful curiosity. They

were all more or less addicted to profane language, strangely sounding oaths and imprecations were familiar to their lips. Houlahan was the worst, as might well be expected in a man who boasted of having no faith. The sacred name of God and the accursed name of Satan were all the same to him, and both were frequently on his lips, without reverence for the one, as without horror of the other. It was one of his proudest boasts that he had been born in that city, "he was a native, every inch of him," and was death on all foreigners. This piqued Con not a little, and he sometimes forgot himself so far as to retort upon Houlahan, by reminding him of his parents, who, to Tom's indelible disgrace, had been "mere Irish."

"What do you think your poor father and mother would say if they heard you now, Houlahan?"

"They be d—d! what care I what they'd say? If they hadn't chanced to be Irish, I'd have been a true-blue American, and not as I am, a half-breed sort of a feller. If I only had my choice I wouldn't have a drop of Irish blood in me. No, by —! I would not."

"It's a pity you couldn't get new blood in your veins," observed Con, with sly humor; "if I was in your place I'd try, at any rate."

"None of your dry jokes now!" would Houlahan answer; "if I have Irish blood in my veins, I a'nt a confounded Papist like you, bending the knee to crosses and pictures and all such stuff. I'm a free-

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born American, my boy! and have no master but myself. I a'nt any of your mean-spirited, old-womanish fellers as go to confession, and count their beads, and take a bath of holy water once in a while—to cool their crazy brains, I guess. I ha'nt got anything Irish about me but the name, and I'll make folks forget that, by jingo!"

It sometimes happened that either Smith or Byrne would take up the cudgels against Tom, undertaking to call him to account for his anti-Irish, or anti-Catholic tendencies. Tom, however, would soon silence them with:

"Shut up there!—You have no right to talk.—You're native-born like myself, and as for your being Papists, I don't believe a word of it. I never sets any one down in black and white as a Papist unless he goes to their Church regular. Some folks may, but I don't, so I'll give you credit for being free citizens like myself, if you'll only keep from making yourselves out what you are not. It's enough for O'Regan to talk and not you. He ha'nt got the verdant hue of 'ould Ireland' off him yet, and his religion is boiling hot. So it's good fun talking to him, and trying to cool him down somewhat. He's a good feller, is O'Regan, and I want to wean him off his old Paddy-ish notions which will never do here."

This was satisfactory to all save Con himself, who would coolly answer: "It's very good of you, indeed, Houlahan, to take so much trouble on my ac-

count, but you needn't mind. I'm too old a bird to be caught with chaff, and as to your weaning, I'd have you to know that I cut my eye teeth long ago. So, you see, there's not much chance of my being weaned now."

This would call forth a general laugh, but Con was proof against laughter as well as reproach, and day after day he looked with more distrust on those whom he had at first singled out for the kindly interchange of friendly sympathy.

A few days after Con entered upon the duties of his new situation the feast of the Purification came round, and as most of the solemn festivals of the Church are, in those parts, postponed to the following Sunday, Con knew he had liberty to work as usual. Nevertheless he took care to hear Mass the first thing, in order to sanctify the day. On his way home he met Byrne, who asked him where he had been so early.

"I was at Mass."

"At Mass!—the deuce you were!—do you go to Mass every morning?"

"No, indeed, Phil! I do not. But, you know, this is the feast of the Purification—Candlemas Day we used to call it at home, and it was always a holyday with us. So I thought I'd just run up to the Church and hear Mass before I'd go to my work."

A loud laugh was Byrne's reply, as he turned away, but he waited to tell Con that he ought to put

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on petticoats at once. "My old mother and you
would make a famous pair," said he; "I warrant
you she's been to Mass, too, this morning. For my
part, I'm in more humor of sleeping than praying."
And a gaping yawn confirmed the assertion.

"Why, you must have been up very early!" re-
marked Con, endeavoring to repress the indignation
naturally excited by the other's insolent taunt.

"Early! Ha! ha! I guess I was, for I ha'nt
been in bed all night. I fell in with a set of jolly
fellers last night down to Bryan Fitzsimmons', and
we had such glorious fun that we kept it up all night.
I was first rate while it lasted, but I guess I'll pay
for *my* share of it all day, for I know I shan't be
able to keep my eyes open."

"Well! well!" said Con, "I'm sorry you haven't
more sense, Phil. You'd better hurry home now
and get your breakfast. You'll not have much time
to spare."

"My breakfast!" said the other, with something
like a growl; "yes, if I can get it. If that tarnation
old woman ha'nt it ready, she'll catch it for her
church-going—I swan she will!" And so saying,
the dutiful son hurried away as fast as his tottering
limbs would carry him. Con stood looking after
him for a moment, and then resumed his homeward
way, with a deep-drawn sigh, and a sense of humili-
ation for which he could hardly account.

"Ah, then! God help the mothers of the world!"
said he, within himself; "many's the hard day that

poor woman had, rearing you," apostrophizing Byrne, "and this is her thanks now! Sure enough, God is good and patient when He lets the like of you go on from day to day and from year to year! Well! it's no wonder one's heart warms to poor Ireland, for we'd be a long time in it before we'd hear the like of that."

Before many hours had passed, Con had reason to repent of having told Byrne that he had been at Mass that morning, for Byrne told it to the others as a capital joke, and it was bandied from mouth to mouth all the forenoon, till happily something newer turned up. Con's patience was sorely tried, and he was several times on the point of making a sharp retort, but then again he would think, "that would only make matters worse. If there was any disturbance raised, they'd be sure to lay the blame on me, and I haven't Mr. Coulter here to take my part. God grant me patience with these fellows!"

Byrne's heavy eyes were, of course, noticed, and he was laughingly called upon to give an account of himself—which he did, nothing loath, well knowing that neither ridicule nor censure awaited him. It turned out, in fact, that he was not the only one who had gone without sleep, for Houlahan had been to a Native Meeting, which had carried its noisy deliberations far into the night, "and after that," said the narrator, with a low chuckling laugh, "we went some here and some there in search of amusement. I guess it was near morning when I got home," he

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concluded, "so I tumbled into my nest for an hour
or two, till some of the boarders knocked at my
door and told me breakfast was ready."

This was all very intelligible, even to Con, with
the exception of two words which required explana-
tion. "A Native Meeting!" said he; "ah! then,
Tom, what kind of a meeting is that, if you please?"

"Hear the greenhorn now how he talks!" was
Houlahan's good-humored answer; "but, I guess,
we must enlighten him. A Native Meeting is one
got up to keep you and all other such covies in your
own places. Do you understand?"

Con did understand, though not until he had re-
flected for a moment. The old Milesian blood
mounted to his cheek, and on his lips was a caustic,
scathing answer, but he resolutely kept down the
unruly spirit and drove back the sharp rebuke into
his heart. Biting his lips till they were almost
white, he thanked Houlahan for his expiation, and
removed himself as soon as he possibly could from
the hearing of whatever might pass between the
worthy friends and companions.

Happily for Con there were one or two real full-
blooded Americans also employed in the store, men,
who minded their business and nothing else, and
with them he usually took refuge, when his patience
was well nigh exhausted with the levity, and heart-
lessness, and irreligion of the others. True only to
the light-hearted and somewhat volatile character
of their race, these Irish Yankees had lost every

higher and more noble trait of the people from whom they sprang. The genial kindness of heart, the reverence for sacred and venerable things, the respect for authority, all these were gone—

"Fled like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leaving no trace behind."

Ah! little indeed do the generality of Irish parents think, as they see their children growing up around them amongst a worldly and irreligious people, of the fearful gulf which passing years will create between them and their offspring—a gulf which *may* be eternal! Little indeed can they foresee of the evil which may come upon themselves because of those very children, and if not to themselves, undoubtedly to the children, when *they* are gone to another world to render an account of the manner in which they discharged their parental duties!

It came to pass after a little while that Con closed his ears altogether against the discourse of Houlahan and the two sham Catholics, so that even when he chanced to be near them he heard but little of what they said. One day, however, his attention was arrested by the name of Tom Derragh, accidentally mentioned by Smith.

"So you know Derragh?" said Con.

"Why, yes, I guess I do!—we ha'n't been a-board-
ing in the same house these three months without my knowing him. What do you know about him?"

"Oh! not much since he came to this country, but we're from the same place at home."

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"Tom's a rum customer," observed Smith; "at times, you'd think him a first-rate feller, ready and willing to help on the fun, up to everything in fact, and neither boring himself nor others with any of your confounded nonsense; the next time you're out with him, he'll be as ticklish as a young colt, afraid of his very shadow, and preaching up religion and sobriety, nothing less! He's for all the world like a weather-cock—you're never sure of finding him one day in the same humor. You know Derragh, don't you, Houlahan?"

"Know him?" said the other, with a portentous shake of the head and a grim smile; "ay! that I do. He has a fist like a sledge-hammer—he has! We quarrelled once down to Thomson Dillon's, and the confounded ass gave me a box just here on the bridge of the nose that made the blood flow, I tell you. I had the mark of that blow on my phiz for weeks after in black, blue, and yaller. But he didn't have it all for nothing!" he added, with a scowl of gratified revenge; "Jim Lawson and me fell on him, and I reckon we gave him about the worth of what he gave me. Oh! yes, I know Derragh!—I do! and a d—d scoundrelly Paddy he is too. He ha'nt got no more spirit than nothing. There's Jason Gallagher as was working with him on board the Pennsylvania last Fall—ask *him* what Tom Derragh is!"

"Ah!" said Con, within himself, "isn't it hard for any one to keep straight among such lads as

these!—how could poor Tom be anything else? If I was among them as long as he is maybe it's far worse than him I'd be! God keep every one out of harm's way!"

The next time Con met Tom Derragh it was in Barney Brady's, where he went with Andy Dwyer to inquire after a certain Peter Whelan, who was said to have some idea of going out West. Peter was from the same parish with Barney, and had come out in the same ship with him. But their paths had diverged very soon after landing, Peter being a sober, industrious man, given to saving money, whereas Barney was the direct opposite—a careless, improvident, good-natured fellow, who could hardly ever let one dollar overtake another in his pocket. Peter was known to have some hundreds of dollars saved, for he had but a small family, and his wife was to the full as careful as himself. His little savings were regularly invested in the Savings Bank, where interest had been accumulating on interest until Peter had quite a nice little independence, the pride of his own and his wife's heart. Latterly he had taken it into his head to invest his money in land for the benefit of himself and his three boys, who, as Peter said, "will be gettin' young men on my hands some of these days, and they may as well be workin' for themselves out on a farm, as for others here in the city for a trifle of wages that'll go as fast as it's earned."

Con having ascertained Peter's whereabouts, said

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he would go on the following Sunday, with God's help, and see him. He then turned to Tom, who was smoking and lounging lazily with his elbow on the table near where Peggy sat at her knitting.

"Why, Tom, there's some of our men that knows you."

"Very likely!" said Tom, puffing out the smoke faster still. "There's a good many as knows me. I guess you mean Larry Smith—don't you? He told me about you're being there."

"Yes, and Tom Houlahan—a great friend of yours!" added Con, silyly.

"He be — hanged!" said Tom, taking the pipe out of his mouth in order to express himself with the desired energy; "he be hanged! he's no friend of mine, nor never was—he's as big a rap as ever stood in shoe leather."

"He's a Catholic, is he?" inquired Con, very innocently.

"Is it Houlahan?" said Tom, indignantly; "why, the fellow has no more religion in him than a dog, and he hates Catholics as he hates—hunger! He got at me one time about my old dad being in purgatory, and wanted to know if I couldn't spare a trifle to the priest to get him out. Faith he did, Con, that very Houlahan! but I tell you I answered him in a way that he didn't bargain for. I flattened his big nose for him, and made him anybody's fancy. I warrant you he let me alone ever since about religion—he did so, for he found it was the

best of his play!" And Tom resumed his pipe with great self-complacency. A heavy sigh from Peggy made him turn quickly in her direction.

"What's the matter with you now, Peggy?" he asked in a softened voice.

"Oh! nothing worth speaking of," said Peggy, in her usually subdued tone—"I was only thinking of the quare world we're in—that's all."

Tom eyed her a moment in silence as though considering what her words might mean, but Peggy's meaning lay too deep for his penetration, never of the keenest, and he had his own reasons for not plying her with questions. He was silent for a moment, and then he said to Con with something like a smile:

"I don't know how it is, Con! but somehow I don't feel as if I was the same man at all when I'm here with Peggy that I am elsewhere. The very sight of her always sets me a thinking, and I get a making ever so many good resolutions in my own mind——"

"Ay! but they don't last long," said Peggy, with a mournful smile; "you're no sooner in bad company again than the good resolutions are all gone. An' it'll never be any other way, Tom—I tell you that plainly—till you keep away from them companions of yours altogether."

"But how could I do that, *alanna*! when our work brings us together? You know I must work or starve."

"Nonsense, Tom, nonsense!—see how Con O'Re-

OR,

resumed his pipe with a heavy sigh from Peggy's direction.

"You now, Peggy?" he

"ing of," said Peggy, in a low voice, "I was only thinking of what's all."

silence as though content to mean, but Peggy's penetration, never of her own reasons for not playing as silent for a moment, something like a smile:

"Con! but somehow I can't find a man at all when I'm looking elsewhere. The very thought of it, and I get a resolution in my own

long," said Peggy, with a sigh, "no sooner in bad resolutions are all gone. I tell you away from them come."

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me!—see how Con O'Re-

gan doesn't starve, or Andy Dwyer there, or this very Peter Whelan they were talking of a while ago. They're all working men like yourself, an' still they choose their company. You see Con is in the very store with that Houlahan an' Larry Smith, an' how well he doesn't take up with them. Oh, no! because he has the grace of God about him, an' knows he can't handle pitch without dirtying his fingers. Shame on you, Tom Derragh, every one can have a decent spirit but you. But, God help you! how could you be anything but what you are—you that hardly ever crosses a church door?"

"Well! I suppose it's all true enough, Peggy," said Tom, wincing just a little, "but don't be too hard on me! There's some of it your own fault, after all, and you know that well enough."

"My fault!" said Peggy, sharply; "what do you mean by that, Tom Derragh?"

"Why, if you'd only do what you ought to do, and take me for better for worse, you'd have it all in your own hands."

"Indeed then I wouldn't," said Peggy, with a scornful laugh; "I'm better as I am, an' maybe so are you. I'm no wife for anybody now, God help me! an' *you're* just as bad on the other side. So there's no use talkin' that way."

"There's no use talkin' to *you* at any time, Peggy," said Tom, gruffly, "only just what you take in your own head. A body might as well talk to the wall."

"Just as well!" echoed Peggy, who was already sinking into her dreamy abstraction. Tom looked at Con in a way that seemed to say: "Did you ever see such a strange creature?" Con smiled and shook his head, as much as to say: "Between you be it! You know each other best!"

The truth is that he was, at the moment, listening much amused to the conversation going on in the rear between Andy Dwyer, Barney Brady and his wife. Andy had been lecturing Barney very gravely on his wasteful, improvident habits, Barney sitting the while, as it would seem, on the stool of repentance, and his wife enforcing "the words of wisdom" by an occasional ejaculation, such as "That's it, Andy!—that's just what I tell him!" "Ha! ha! Barney, do you hear that?" "Put that in your pipe and smoke it!" Once or twice, however, Barney's patience was too sorely tested by this joint attack, and, as he dared not rebel against Dwyer, for whom he had a great respect, he would turn short on his wife with:

"Shut up now, Anty! I want to hear none of *your* lingo! Can't you let the decent man go on without breakin' in on him every now and then with your nonsense?"

"Just so, Anastasia," would Andy add, "leave Bernard to me. Bernard knows that I'm for his good, and he'll mind what I say to him, I hope in God. He will walk no more in the way of the ungodly, or frequent the company of sinners. But I

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see my friend Cornelius is preparing to start, so I must bid you good-bye. Now, Anastasia, try and have a little more patience, remembering always that 'a soft word turneth away wrath,' and for you, Bernard, let the taverns alone. When your day's work is over, come home to your wife and your little family, and take up some good book to pass the time. The devil is afraid of good books, Bernard, take my word for it. Just do what I tell you, for a few evenings, and you'll soon get a heart-hatred for the drink and the bad company. Good night, now, Bernard!—good night, Mrs. Brady!—and where's Peggy?" Peggy stood up, and extended her hand to him with a smile; "good night, Peggy, *ma colleen beg!*—if we were all like you, Peggy! it would be well for some of us!" So nodding to Tom, the worthy man followed Con down stairs. When he was gone, Barney and Tom exchanged a meaning glance, and a short, significant cough.

"Bless my heart!" said Barney, with an admonitory motion of his finger, "what a power of fine lingo Andy can put out. It's a thousand pities he didn't get on to be a priest. I declare he has *me* n'most converted from them 'ways of the ungodly' that he was talkin' of. Don't you think I look mighty solemn, Tom?"

"As solemn as an owl in a fir-tree," said Tom; "and sure if you're not converted, Bernard, both you and Anastasia there," mimicking Andy's tone, "it isn't Andy's fault. Next time I come I expect

to find you hard and fast a *Think Well On It*, or some other good book. The old boy is afraid of them, it seems, so if you'll only hammer away at them for a time you'll be able to hunt him when he comes."

Barney and his wife both laughed, but Peggy told them it was "a shame for them to laugh at any such ravin' nonsense"—"go off out of this, Tom Derragh," she added, angrily, "it's in your bed you ought to be at this hour of the night, an' not helpin' up this poor foolish man here to make game of *his* betters an' yours."

Tom attempted to apologize, but Peggy would hear nothing, and literally drove him out of the room, telling him not to come back till he learned better manners.



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CHAPTER XVI.

On the following Sunday when Con O'Regan took Paul Bergen with him to see Peter Whelan, they found himself and his wife "in the height of trouble," as they said themselves. It appeared that the Savings Bank in which Peter's little hoard was invested had stopped payment a few days before, and nothing could persuade the afflicted couple but that all was lost. Andy did his best to persuade them that the Bank would most probably go on as usual after a temporary suspension of payment had enabled the company to arrange their affairs. But he might as well have tried to reason with the wind. Mrs. Whelan would hardly hear a word so great was her indignation against "the robbers that lived by plunderin' the poor, ridin' about in their fine carriages, at the expense of creatures like them that earned their money hard and sore. And God knows but we did that!" she added with a burst of tears that came from her very heart. "There wasn't a cent of ill-got money in them five hundred dollars, not one cent, and ooh! ooh! but that poor man and myself toiled many's

the day and begrudged ourselves a'most the bit we ate or the rag we wore, so as to keep that money together!"

"If we had only had the good luck," said Peter, a thin and rather care-worn man, "to have got out of this unlucky place last Fall when I wanted to go, we'd be all right now. We'd be settled by this time on a good farm of our own that no villains of bankers could take from us! But och! och! that wasn't our luck! and now we're just as if we never had a shillin.' Black poverty is on us again, the Lord in heaven help us!"

"Tut! tut, man!" said Andy, "don't be so easy cast down. All's not lost that's in danger, you know. Here's Cornelius O'Regan, a worthy young friend and countryman of ours. He has got a good chance that put him in the way of emigrating out West, and he heard you were thinking of going. Not a word now, Peter, if *you* please—I know what you're going to say, but I tell you that you'll be with him yet with the assistance of God!"

"I wish we could!" said Peter in a desponding tone, "but there's little chance of it now, still an' all I'm glad to see you, Corny!" and he shook his hand warmly, as did also his wife. "Since luck seems inclined to leave us, I'm well pleased to see it with *you*. A week ago Mary and myself were full sure of being off in the spring with our little boys, but now—" he stopped and heaved a deep sigh, then added quickly—"but what's the use of com-

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 but what God ordains for us. Dry up your tears,
 Mary, honey! and see if you can't find something
 for us to drink. I suppose you're no teetotaller,
 Corny?"

"Well! I am!" said Con, "though I can't say
 I ever took the pledge, but since I came to this
 country I just laid it on myself to avoid liquor
 altogether."

"And you're so far right," said Peter, with an ap-
 proving nod to his wife. "It takes a man to have
 all his wits about him here to get along at all, and
 as for the money it's a short way it goes if a body
 once gets a habit of tippling. Oh! there's no fear
 of *you* but you'll do well wherever you go. I might
 have known you were a decent, sober young man,
 or you and Andy wouldn't be much together."

"Well!" said Andy, "I'm obliged to you, Peter,
 for your good opinion, and I must own that I *am*
 rather particular in choosing my company, bearing
 always in mind what the great Apostle Paul tells us
 in one of his Epistles—I forget which of them, in-
 deed! that 'evil communication corrupts good mo-
 rals.' But you must excuse us now, Peter, for my
 woman made me promise to bring Cornelius here
 back to tea, and I think it is drawing towards even-
 ing. Good-bye, Mrs. Whelan! keep up your heart,
 ma'am! and pray to God, and you'll see things won't
 be so bad with you as you expect."

"Well! God grant it!" was the pious response

CON O'REGAN ; OR,

sure if it's *His* holy will to give us back our hard earnin' again, none of them can keep it from us. But ooh! I'm afeard, Andy dear! that there's little chance!"

"There may be more than you think now," said Andy, looking back, "so mind and don't be faint-hearted!"

Andy spoke against his own convictions, as he acknowledged to Con when they were some distance from the house. "If they do get a share of it," said he, "I'm afraid it'll be a very small one. When vagabonds like these once get their hands closed on the money, it'll be hard to get it out of their clutches. God forgive them this day, and may He open their eyes to the iniquity of robbing the industrious poor! But, you see, Cornelius! this is only another proof that land is the best thing to invest money in. There's no bank like a good farm, for there's no bank so sure but it may go some day, whereas the farm can never fail, if a man only takes care to till it. The earth will always bring forth its fruit, Cornelius, for the Lord has promised that seed-time and harvest shall never fail."

Con listened with respectful attention, admiring the depth of Andy's wisdom, and thanking God at the same time that he was in a fair way of having the promise realized in his behalf. Everything he saw and heard deepened the conviction on his mind that the city was no place for him or his, and he began to look forward with eager expectation to the

day that was to liberate him from its thralls, and send him forth to breathe the pure air of the country as a tiller of the soil.

"This packing of boxes and barrels and wheeling of trucks," said he to Winny, when he went to see her after tea, "is a tiresome thing after all, and a man might be at it for years and years without betterin' his condition. When I get on the farm, I'll have to work hard, to be sure, but then it'll be for myself and my family. There's not a day's work I do, but it'll be so much before me, an' besides that's the kind of work that I like to be at, out all day in the open air, and not cooped up within four walls, listenin' to all kinds of bad discourse, an' seein' very little that's good. I wish it was the morrow we were to start—but—but—" he hesitated as he looked at Winny and saw the tear gathering in her eye.

"But what, Con?"

"Why, nothing, only I'm afraid you'll be very lonesome after I go, till such times as Biddy comes out."

"Oh! never fret about that," said his sister, with forced cheerfulness; "how did I do before you came at all—when the salt ocean was betwixt us?—but God was with me then, and he'll be with me again when I have no one else—blessed be His name!"

Many little matters were discussed and settled on that evening during the two hours that Con staid, for Letty was gone to church to hear a great sermon from Mr. Shillingworth, which the ladies would not

have her miss for anything. Being thus freed from the restraint of her presence and the annoyance of her good-natured officiousness, the brother and sister talked over everything that concerned them—things past, present, and future, until the sound of the door-bell apprized them of the return of the Misses Coulter and Letty.

"My stars!" cried Letty, throwing her little bulky body heavily on the first chair she came to in the kitchen, "my stars! but I *am* tired!—and I'm sure the sermon wan't worth much after all. I'm real sorry I went. You've had such a nice, quiet chat here, you two. I a'nt hardly able to speak. That tiresome man kept us so long. But I had a comfortable nap after all, only for that I'd have felt dreadful bad. My sakes! such an awful sermon! It was two hours if it was one minute! Winny! take my bonnet like a good creature. Well! Con, when are you going to start?"

"As early as we can in the month of April, Letty. They say the canals won't be open sooner."

"Oh, of course they won't. But have you everything ready, Con? and how many of you are going?"

Con laughed as he replied: "I'm sorry I can't tell you, Letty, how many are going, but as for the preparations, I'm all ready, thanks to Winny there and some other body that gave her a good hand. May the Lord reward every one that assists the needy!—and He *will* reward them an hundred-fold in the other world."

"I don't know as to that," said Letty, rather thoughtfully, "but let it be as it may, I guess it's reward enough for one to have the pleasure of helping folks when they stand in need of it. I don't want any other reward. As for them 'ere future rewards, I wish we may git them, that's all, but they aint sure, so they don't count for much."

Winny and Con exchanged a look of melancholy meaning, but neither made any direct reply, for experience had shown both that poor Letty's understanding was encoased in a double crust of ignorance and indifference which no effort of theirs could penetrate.

Con soon after bade the girls good night and went on his way musing on Letty's hard fate. Her ignorance of the simplest elements of religion was to him wholly inexplicable, considering how flippantly she talked of ministers and criticized sermons. Alas! he knew little how empty, how hollow is the theoretical religion which Letty had heard preached from her infancy—how little hold it has on the heart, how little impression it makes on the mind. A mere chaos is the thing called Protestantism, dark and void, and shapeless like the original nothing from which the world was formed.

Winny laid her head on her pillow that night in a more desponding spirit than was usual with her. She had prayed long and earnestly for the spiritual and temporal welfare of her brother, yet peace did not all at once descend on her troubled spirit. But

anon came the recollection of the beautiful title: *Comfort of the afflicted*, bestowed by the Church on "Mary, the Mother of Jesus," and the thought was as oil to the troubled waters. Deep in her heart she breathed the sweet prayer of St. Bernard, beginning with the words, "Remember, oh most pious and tender Virgin," and the prayer was hardly ended when hope took possession of Winny's soul, and tranquil slumber sealed her eyelids.

In the course of a few days Con O'Regan heard that Andy's conjectures were right as regarded poor Whelan's loss. The Savings Bank was found wholly unable to resume payment, and how indeed could it? its Directors and other officials had been for years investing its capital in divers speculations on their own separate accounts. Many of these speculations had been a dead failure; the main capital of the Bank was swallowed up; whispers had gone abroad as to how the matter stood; a run followed, and then came out the terrible truth. Thousands of poor people, very many of them Irish tradesmen and small dealers, were left penniless—the savings of years melted in a moment before their eyes into thin air, and the cry of sorrow was heard in many a home where peace and contentment had lately reigned. But what could be done? How were these poor deluded thousands to obtain redress? They were foreigners, very low down, indeed, in the scale of social importance, while the robbers, the swindlers, were at its very summit. "Grave and

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reverend signors," mightily respected in the community, occupying high seats in their respective conventicles, and noted above all for their burning zeal for the conversion of Jews, Pagans, Romanists, and all other such unrighteous folk. One of the Directors of the Bank, who was likewise one of the chief defaulters, presided at a meeting of the Home and Foreign Missionary Society on the very same evening that saw his delinquency published in the city journals. But "Dalton *was* an honorable man," none the less honorable for having made away with some fifty thousand dollars or so, of Irish money. What had the Irish serfs to do but make money to deposit in Savings Banks for the furtherance of mercantile enterprize in that great and flourishing city?

But the public were not all of one mind on this subject. Even in that Pharisical city, and amongst its chief citizens, there were many who sympathized deeply with the poor victims of this wholesale robbery, and denounced with all their hearts the unfeeling hypocrites who thus wasted the substance of the poor. Foremost amongst these was our worthy friend, Mr. Coulter, who keenly felt the disgrace thus entailed on his whole class and on the city to which they all belonged. It so happened that his partner, Mr. Pims, was one of the Directors of the Bank in question, and Mr. Coulter expressed his opinion of the whole concern in no very flattering terms. Entering the office one morning with a "daily" in his hand, he accosted Pims as follows:

"I say, Pims! were you at that meeting last night?"

"What meeting?" said the other, in affected surprise.

"Why that meeting of the Home and Foreign Missionary Society" pointing, as he spoke, to the printed account, headed in flourishing capitals.

"I was not," said Pims; "I would have been, but for Mrs. Pims's illness. She was pretty bad all the evening."

"But I see Dutton *was*, if you were not," went on Mr. Coulter. "He occupied the chair, it seems. I shouldn't wonder if it blistered his nether end. Fitter for him to have been at home hiding his dishonored head. Well! I would give a trifle to know now what kind of heart that man has got. As for religion, the *less* said about that the better for all concerned. But his heart—I should like to have it analyzed, for it strikes me it can't be composed of flesh and blood, like other hearts—eh, Pims? Good God!" he suddenly added, giving the other no time to answer, "what a monstrous anomaly! A man presiding at a meeting for the spread of the Gospel amongst unbelievers, and himself just then caught in the act of violating both the spirit and the letter of that Gospel. Bah!—how I loathe such hypocrites! Convert the heathen, indeed! and the Jew—and the Papist!—why there's ne'er a one of them but may be nearer salvation at this moment than that 'whited

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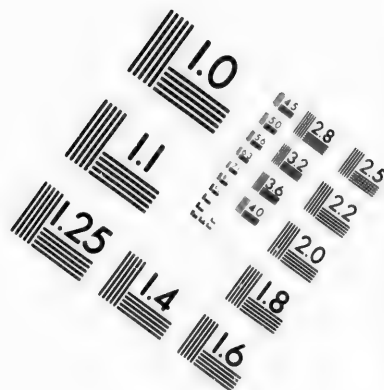
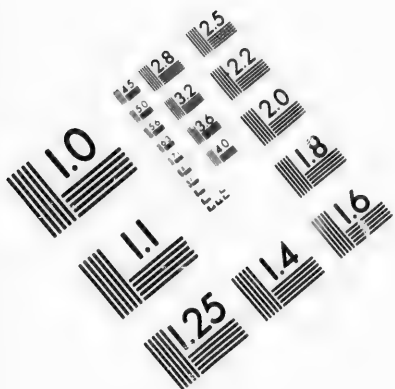
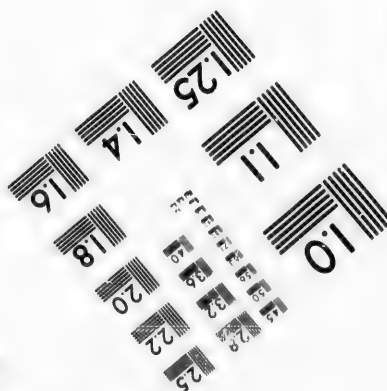
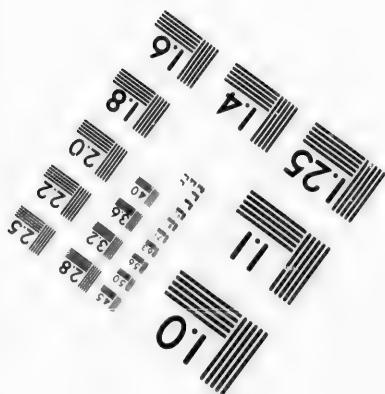
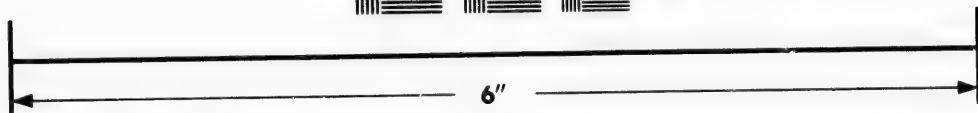
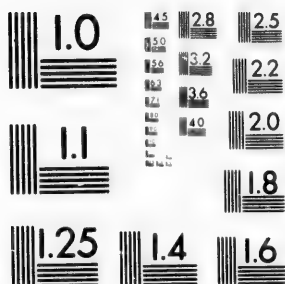


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sepulchre.' You're a precious fine set, Pims! take you altogether!"

"Why, really, Mr. Coulter!" said Pims, with a sickly attempt at a smile, "I cannot understand why you are so severe on Dutton. Surely it is not his fault if the affairs of the Bank have not prospered. You wouldn't have him pay, out of his own pocket, all these outrageous savages who are clamoring for money—hovering in crowds around the door, like crows watching for a carrion? If you expect any such thing, I wouldn't give much for your sense of justice. For my part, I'd see the confounded rabble in Jericho before I'd even think of such a thing!"

"No doubt, Pims, no doubt!" said his partner, with provoking coolness. "These poor people are a confounded rabble, now that they begin to look for their money. If you called them confounded *fools*, now, I wouldn't wonder, because if they were *not* fools they would never have given you and Dutton and Peterson and all the others the chance of feathering your nests at their expense. If they asked my advice, they'd never invest one solitary cent in your Savings Banks. Savings Banks, indeed! Losing Banks would be the fitter name as regards the depositors! Has Wood been here to-day yet?"

Pims replied in the negative, and then sullenly turned away, muttering something that was anything but complimentary to his senior. The latter looked after him with a comical expression on his bluff features, then entered his own sanctum and carefully

closed the door. He had a thorough contempt for the school to which both his partners belonged, and it was seldom indeed that he attempted to conceal his sentiments on that or any other subject. Dissimulation in others was his special abhorrence, and he never, on any account, practised it himself.

Could Mr. Coulter have traced the effects of this Bank failure in their individual application, his honest heart would have throbbed with still fiercer indignation. As it was, he could have only a general idea of the mournful consequences, but the deeper and more harrowing scenes of misery were beyond the sphere of his calculations, and well for him that it was so, since he had no means of remedying those evils which he could only deplore. Peter Whelan's case, however lamentable, was none of the most deplorable. In one instance, it was a family of several young children, whose father lay at the point of death. He had been a hard-working, industrious mechanic, and with the assistance of his wife, who took in washing, he had scraped together a matter of fifty dollars, which was now gone—gone at the very moment when it was most needed, when death was about to close a long and tedious illness, during which the family had been kept on the very shortest allowance of food, in order to provide medical attendance and the little comforts required for the sick, without drawing on the precious hoard in the Bank. It was the dying husband's constant injunction to his wife to keep

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that together as long as she could. "You'll want it all by and by," he would say, "when you come to bury me. It's not much, but still it's better than nothing." Now the trying time was at hand—the funeral expenses were coming on—a trifle, too, to be paid to the doctor, and the *fifty dollars*—the sole hope of the family—was lost forever. Oh! the misery of that hour! But the prudent wife kept the terrible secret—she knew it would, in all probability, have been instant death to her husband to hear that she was left penniless at such a time, and so he died in blissful ignorance, commending his family to the protection of God and the Blessed Virgin, and as the heart-broken widow closed his sunken eyes, she breathed her fervent thanks to God that poor Jerry died without *that* heavy blow. "He had enough to bear without it," said she, "may the Lord be good and merciful to his soul!" She had no time for indulging the grief which filled her heart, for she had to consider about getting her husband decently buried. How was it to be done, for she hadn't quite a dollar in the house? But something must be done; so she went to a few of her wealthiest acquaintances, told them her mournful story, and asked them to advance the sum which she required on sundry little articles of her household furniture. This they all refused, chiding her for thinking of any such thing, but they went to work, two or three of them, and made up what buried Jerry decently, and left a surplus of some

dollars in the poor widow's hands. Many a curse was heaped that day on the heads of the Bank Directors as the story flew from mouth to mouth.

This was but one of the many distressing scenes which resulted then and afterwards from this atrocious robbery, and what wonder was it that the whole city rang with clamorous complaints and vehement appeals for justice? But vain were cries, and prayers, and tears. The money was not to be had—the Directors would hardly condescend to show how it went, or what prospect there was of any portion of it being refunded, and after a while the public mind forgot all about it in the excitement of some new topic. But long, long was it remembered by those to whom it brought ruin, in many cases destitution. Many an aching heart and many a cheerless home recorded the event for years to come, while the hypocrites who had thus taken from the fatherless and the widow, and squandered the hard earnings of the poor, ascended higher and higher on the social ladder, untroubled with any qualms of conscience, and quite willing to take charge of other Savings Banks, provided they could "get appointed."

There was, then, no chance of Peter Whelan recovering anything from the Bank, so that he was forced to give up the notion of emigrating. "But I'll not give it up altogether," said he to Andy Dwyer, a week or two before the time fixed for Con and the Bergens to start; "oh no! I'll always have

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the hope in my mind that God will one day give me
the means of going. If we get anything from that
villainous Bank, well and good, but if we don't, sure
Mary and myself must only begin the world again,
and if the Lord spares us our health, maybe we
won't be off in search of land—maybe we won't!"

"I suppose you'll hardly put any more money in
Savings Banks, anyhow," observed Andy, with a
quiet smile. "A burnt child dreads the fire, they
say."

"Is it me?" cried Peter, "me put money again in
one of them blackguard nests of robbery! Ah! if
they never get anybody's cash into their clutches till
they get mine, they may live to the age of Mathuse-
lem. If I ever get a little scraped together again,
I'd sooner throw it in the fire than invest it in Banks
—invest, indeed!—to the devil I pitch such invest-
ments! But, after all, it's a folly to talk. I'll only
have to look sharp for the time to come."

Meanwhile Paul Bergen and his wife had duly re-
ceived the long-looked-for letter from Felix, contain-
ing a draft on one of the City Banks for one hun-
dred and fifty dollars. "I would have sent you
more," said Felix, in the letter, "but that Judy and
myself thought it best only to send what would just
be enough to take you all out. You'll find all things
provided here when you come—at least, you'll have
your farm ready for the spade and the plough, and
our house will be yours till you can get one up for
yourself. Judy and me are ever so glad to hear of the

fine family you have, may the Lord spare them all to be a comfort to you in your old days! They'll have a good chance out here. We're all well pleased that there's some more coming with you. There's room enough here and to spare, and you know the old saying, 'The more the merrier.' You want to know if we have a priest living here, and I wish I could say 'Yes.' As yet we have only Mass once in every two weeks or so, when a priest from the next mission comes here. We have a little Church that we put up a couple of years ago, and when we get able to raise a better and larger one, this will do us for a schoolhouse. As yet we have no schoolmaster, but Father Doran says he has one in view for us, if he can only find him out in time. He's going to advertise him in the papers, for he knows he's somewhere in the New England States. This will be good news for you that has a family growing up. When we have a good priest and a good schoolmaster, we'll have all we want. Make haste now, all of you. Be alive, and have your wits about you on the road, and don't let the sharks get the better of you." Felix then went on to give the necessary instructions as to the route to be taken and other matters of that kind. Felix was a travelled man, and prided himself no little on his practical knowledge of the country.

All was now joyous bustle in the house of Paul Bergen. Nora began to hold up her head already in an independent manner, as became the wife of a

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landed proprietor—that was to be. There were fifty things to be bought and got ready for the journey, and amongst the rest there were pairs upon pairs of socks and stockings to be knitted. This was a job for Peggy Daly, whom Winny introduced to Mrs. Bergen for that purpose. During the frequent intercourse that grew out of this connection, the warm-hearted Nora became strongly attached to the blind girl, and was often heard to say that "she'd give anything at all to have her with her." Even to Peggy herself this kindly wish was not seldom expressed, but Peggy would only smile and say: "It's not my luck, Mrs. Bergen, dear! I must stay where I am, unless God brings about some great change."

"Well, dear, I'm sorry for it. Indeed I am," said Nora, "but," she added, on one occasion, "of coorse, it's natural for you to stick by your own. It 'id be a lonesome thing for you to part with all the sister you have."

"It would," said Peggy, "but still I could do it if it was the will of God. I'd leave her an' hers in His holy keepin'. But to tell you the truth, Mrs. Bergen,"—she hesitated, and her changing color plainly denoted the struggle going on within. Her little fingers played unconsciously, as it were, with the fringe of her coarse woollen shawl, and her eyelids drooped as though the orbs they covered could have betrayed her emotion.

"What were you goin' to say, *atanna*?" at length

"I was, ma'am." The fingers moved faster yet and more tremulously, and the color on the soft cheek deepened to a carnation hue. "There's another person, Mrs. Bergen! a friend of ours that's taken up entirely with bad company, an' I'm afeard he'd go to the mischief altogether if there wasn't somebody to give him a good advice an' look after him now an' then. He's mighty foolish for himself, Mrs. Bergen! but he has a good heart—indeed he has, ma'am, an' somehow he listens to a word from me when he wouldn't listen to any one else. Him an' me were to have been married onst, but it plased the Lord to take the sight from me, and from that out I made up my mind never to marry him or any one else."

Mrs. Bergen could hardly speak. The tears stood in her eyes, and taking hold of Peggy's hand, she squeezed it hard between her own. "Poor young creature," she at length murmured, "you have a hard cross to bear."

"Oh! not so heavy after all!" said Peggy, with somewhat more cheerfulness, encouraged by the tender sympathy of the other. "If I have my trials, I have my comforts, too. Sometimes I get poor Tom to keep from drink for weeks at a time, an' now and then I get him to go to an early Mass. Well! there's no knowin', ma'am, what *that* may save him from, for you know there's nothing draws down such a curse on man or mortal as neglectin' to hear Mass on Sunday. So you see, dark an' all as I am,

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I can do some good, an' that itself is a great com-
fort to me."

"Well! the Lord bless you, anyhow, poor girl!"
said Mrs. Bergen, warmly, as she shook Peggy's
hand. Peggy returned the pressure and the bless-
ing, then she called her young guide and told him to
take her home now.



CHAPTER XVII.

THE few remaining weeks past away all too quickly,—at least so Winny thought,—and the eve of the day fixed on for "the start" at length arrived. Paul Bergen had sold off his effects to better advantage than he expected, and as he and Nora stood towards evening on the door of their late subterraneous dwelling and surveyed its naked walls now seen in the extreme narrowness of their dimensions, a simultaneous feeling of gratitude swelled their hearts as they thought of the broad open prairie which Felix had described as the location of their new home.

"Aren't we blest and happy, Nora dear," remarked Paul, "to get away out into the open country again?—sure enough it was a poor place this to live in—shut up between these four walls, down ever so far under the ground! I tell you it was well for us that Felix made his way out where he did, or it's what we'd have to live and die, and bring up the children here where neither sun nor air got in to us."

"True for you, Paul," returned Nora, thoughtfully, "we have every reason to hold up our hands

and thank God, when we think of the thousands and thousands in this very city that can't budge from where they are, but must take everything as it comes. But aren't we goin' where I was saying, Paul?"

Paul willingly assented, and both glancing round to see that nothing was left behind, they hastily quitted the cellar, Paul locking the door with the intention of giving up the key to "the landlord," who lived in one of the upper stories of the same house. He and Nora then walked away at a quick pace in an opposite direction. Their children were all safely housed in Andy Dwyer's snug kitchen, Andy and his good partner having kindly insisted on their all making that their home after "the auction" till such times as they'd be ready to start."

Con O'Regan, too, had to take his luggage there, for as the whole party was to set out before daylight in the morning, Andy would have it that there was no use in disturbing two houses. And besides, he said, "I want you all to start from here—that's the plain truth, if you must have it. It may be the last night we'll ever spend together, and we have a thousand things to talk about. So, Cornelius, get your box down here as fast as you can, and, Alice dear, see that you have something nice and comfortable for supper." Mrs. Dwyer answered that she'd do what she could, and Con, fully appreciating Andy's kindness, declared himself quite willing to accept the invitation.

"The only thing is," said he, "that Winny won't know where to find me."

"Oh! never you mind that," was Andy's prompt reply, "we'll see that she *does* know, and I think I may undertake to promise that you'll find her here when you come back. Be off now, as fast as ever you can!"

"I will, then," said Con, "for I have to go and see Mr. Coulter. I want to bid him farewell." So saying, Con hurried away, his mind full of conflicting emotions. When he returned he found Winny before him just as Andy had predicted.

"Why, Winny dear," said her brother, "I hardly expected to see you here. I was thinkin' I'd have to go up to the house."

"See me, indeed!" repeated Winny, with her sad smile; "I can tell you you were near seeing Letty, too. She wanted to come right or wrong, only by good luck I got her persuaded that it wouldn't be right for us both to leave the house at once, for fear the ladies might be wanting something."

"The Lord be praised!" said Con, fervently, "she's a good creature in her own way, but her absence is a cordial at the present time. She'd pestor the life out of us with her good-natured talk."

Andy now inquired if Con had seen Mr. Coulter, and was answered with a sorrowful shake of the head.

"Is it possible that you didn't see him?" cried Winny.

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"Indeed it is, Winny dear. I waited an' waited
as good as an hour, an' couldn't get my eyes on him,
nor none of them could tell me where he was.
What'll I do at all, Winny, if I don't get seein' him
before I go?"

"See him before you go!" cried Winny, in amaze-
ment; "why, you can't go *without* seeing him.
That's all. You'll just have to go to the house this
evening about eight o'clock or so, and then you'll be
sure to find him."

Just then Paul Bergen and Nora came in, and
Mrs. Dwyer was about to ask where they had been,
when her husband checked her by a look, and so,
too, did Winny, who laid her hand impressively on
the good woman's arm, and pointed to the swollen
eyes and dejected features of both.

"Don't you see," said Andy, when he got an op-
portunity, "don't you see by their faces, woman
dear! that they've been paying a last visit to their
poor boy's grave?"

"Ah! then, sure enough, but that's where they
were!—wasn't I blind not to see it? But then my
head was runnin' on these cakes I have in the oven.
They're not risin' as well as I'd wish." And good
Mrs. Dwyer, opening the oven door, was once more
lost in her fears and hopes concerning the interest-
ing edibles on which she had spared neither trouble
nor expense. "Botheration to them for cakes!"
said she to herself, "I'll go bail it's what they'll go
again me, now when a body would wish to have

them the very best. Well! well!" she philosophically added, "sure isn't it the way of the world? It's ever an' always when we want to have a thing right, that it'll be sure to go wrong!"

Although Mrs. Dwyer was so dissatisfied with the result of her culinary labors, the cakes were pronounced excellent by all who had the rare pleasure of tasting them, and, on the whole, the supper passed off very creditably to her and very agreeably to her guests. "The cup that cheers, but not inebriates," went freely round, and inspired by its fragrant aroma, the women were all in high spirits, and chatted away pleasantly, while the men talked over the great business in hand. Andy was rather more oracular than usual, interlarding his discourse with some half dozen Latin proverbs, to the great edification and instruction of his less learned friends. Above all things he begged of Con and Paul to send him back word from time to time touching the true state of the country.

"It *might* please God," he said, "that I'd have the means of going after you, some time or another, and, as I wouldn't wish to do anything rash, I'd like to know exactly what kind of a place it is. I'll depend on you both to give me a full and true account."

The required promise was cheerfully given, and Andy had only time to nod his head and say, "very good!—that will do!" when the door opened and gave admission to the whole household of Barney Brady, from Barney himself down to little Betsy,

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well!" she philosophized. "The way of the world? We want to have a thing or two wrong!"

As so dissatisfied with the cakes, the cakes were pronounced to have had the rare pleasure whole, the supper passed and very agreeably to her tastes, but not inebriates," inspired by its fragrant in high spirits, and chat—the men talked over the Andy was rather more orange his discourse with some to the great edification learned friends. Above on and Paul to send him touching the true state

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was cheerfully given, and d his head and say, "very then the door opened and whole household of Barney self down to little Betsey,

whom he carried in his arms. Tom Derragh and Peggy brought up the rear, the latter holding Johnny by the hand. The boy was so accustomed to lead his aunt that he would not forego that privilege, although the office was a sinecure on that occasion, thanks to the brawny arm which supported Peggy on the other side. The new arrivals were hailed with a burst of joyous welcome, and the two children were speedily conveyed into a corner by Janie and Patsy Bergen. This move elicited an approving nod from Barney.

"That's right, Janie," said he, "we just took them with us that you'd be all together this last night. An' besides," he added, looking round to the elders, "if we hadn't brought them along, somebody must have staid with them, and that would never do, for Anty wanted to come, and Peggy wanted to come, and myself and Tom are only poor hands at nursing, you may be sure, so we wouldn't stay behind, and here we are, you see—bag and baggage, as the saying is."

"And you're all heartily welcome," said Mrs. Dwyer; "sit over here to the table and have a cup of tea."

This offer was declined, for they had all "just got up from the table as they came out, so they had no occasion in life." The supper was then quickly dispatched, and the relics of the feast being duly cleared away, conversation, or rather chat, went on with renewed animation. Winny and Con were seated

together in a corner of the kitchen arranging their little plans for the uncertain period of time which was to elapse before they met again. Many things were still to be talked over, but Winny suddenly stopped and reminded her brother that he had better go off at once to Mr. Coulter's, before it got any later. "Ah! then, sure enough, Winny, it's time I wasn't here," observed Con, rising and reaching for his hat, at the same time informing Andy of where he was going.

"Oh, well! you mustn't go alone," said Andy, rising, too; "we'll not be long away, Bernard, so I'll leave you all to entertain each other for a little while."

Con protested against Andy's going with him, but it was no use, go Andy would, and they both reached the door, when a gentle tap was heard on the outside, and the door being opened, in walked Mr. Coulter himself, his honest, cheerful face all in a glow after his long walk in the cool, fresh air of the spring evening.

"Where are you bound for, Con?" was his first salutation, as the young man stepped back respectfully to make way for him.

"Indeed, then, I was just goin' down to your house, sir, as I couldn't see you all day."

"Well! you see I have saved you that trouble. I heard you had been wanting to see me, and I thought you might hardly find time to call again." This was said with a smile, for Mr. Coulter knew

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very well that Con *would* have found time. Glan-
ing his quick eye round, the old gentleman was not
slow in perceiving Winny, who had stood up at his
entrance, as did all the others. Nodding kindly to
Winny, Mr. Coulter said, with the suavity of a true
gentleman :

"Sit down, my good people, sit down! Pray
don't disturb yourselves on my account."

The seats being all resumed, and the children
thrust away into holes and corners, "for fear of an-
noying the gentleman," Mr. Coulter turned once
more to Con : "And so, Con, you propose to start
in the morning, don't you?"

"With God's help, I do, sir, thanks to you and
the ladies."

"To me and the ladies, Con!" repeated Mr. Coul-
ter, facetiously ; "oh! if the ladies have a hand in
your undertaking there is no fear of its failure.
The ladies have unlimited power in this world of
ours. We have heard of *all* power being given to
certain parties in times past, but I think there must
be some mistake in the record, though it *be* the
Bible. It is certainly the ladies who have 'all
power' now-a-days—at least, if they have not, I
know not who has."

The irreverence of this speech was overlooked
by the company, who had far too much respect for
the speaker to criticize his words even in thought.
Andy alone took upon him to reply :

"By dad, sir, they have made a great stir in the

world ever since it *was* a world. From Eve down to Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, that turned the head of the renowned Mark Antony, and from her to Queen Elizabeth, the pet daughter of Harry the Eighth, and a great pillar of the Reformation, the ladies have played the mischief with the poor nouns masculine. Helen of Troy raised a dust that didn't settle again for ten long years, and in Ireland we had a sister of hers, her name Dervorghal, who wasn't a bit better than she should be, the thief of the world."

Andy paused from sheer want of breath, and Mr. Coulter politely assented, regarding his new acquaintance with some degree of interest as a specimen of original character.

"You are quite right, Mr. —," said he, hesitating; "Mr. —, ah!—excuse me—I have forgotten your name."

"My name is Dwyer, sir, at your service!—Andrew Dwyer!" and Andy bowed very low, by way of showing his manners. The name was all that Mr. Coulter wanted, as he meant to cultivate Andy's acquaintance a little farther.

"And so this is a farewell party," observed Mr. Coulter, glancing once more over the company; "are all these friends of yours bound for the West, Con?"

"Oh no, sir, there's only myself and Paul Bergen and his family," pointing them out in succession, "none of the others are able to go, though it isn't

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their hearts would hinder them, if they had the means."

"Indeed!" said the old gentleman, thoughtfully;
"why, I think you told me there were several fami-
lies to go with you."

"Well! so we thought then, sir, but when all
came to all there could none of them go except us.
There was Peter Whelan thought he had nothing
to do but 'bundle and go,' but the Savings Bank
settled him, and left him that he couldn't go any-
where at the present time. Then there was Philip
Quigley had a little money by him, and thought as
he was a lone man, it would be enough to take him,
and, what do you think, Mr. Coulter, but a couple
of nights ago, the house he boarded in took fire, and
poor Philip lost every cent he had. Another man
took sick some weeks ago, and had to go to hospi-
tal, and between his own little expenses there and
the support of his family, there's a big hole made in
the money. So that's the way of it, sir, and a poor
way it is, too."

"And this fine young fellow here?" inquired Mr.
Coulter, pointing to Tom Derragh. "Is not he
going?"

Con only smiled and shook his head, but Tom
bluntly answered: "No, sir, I a'n't a-going. I'm
sorry for it, but it can't be helped. People can't
fly to the West or anywhere else, I reckon."

"Certainly not, young man, a little money is re-
quired for that, like most other things; but surely

you ought to have *some* money. How long have you been in this country?"

"Ten years or so," was the dogged reply.

"Ten years!" repeated Mr. Coulter, in a tone of surprise. "And you have no family, have you?"

"Well no—I ha'nt—but to tell you the truth, sir, I never *could* get money to stick to me. It went as fast as it came. I was always a graceless lubber, good for nothing but spending money. Drunk and sober—drunk and sober—that's the way it is with me, and so it'll be to the end of the chapter. So there's an end of it."

Peggy could not stand this. Forgetful for a moment of the respected presence of that kind Mr. Coulter, of whom she had heard so much, the poor girl could not allow Tom to blacken his own reputation in that way. She could abuse him herself at times, but she could never hear him abused by another without taking up his defence warmly.

"Ah! then, never mind him, sir," she cried in a vehement tone, "he's not half so bad as he'd make himself out. Indeed he's not, sir. Many a good dollar of his earnin' goes in charity, an' I know he gave as good as a hundred dollars to doctors, one way an' another, tryin' to get somebody cured of what's never to be cured in this world. He's a little wild, now an' then, sir, but he works hard when he's at his work, an' nobody could ever say that he spent what wasn't his own."

Poor Peggy's burst of excitement was now over

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and she felt as though she could sink into the ground as she thought of who it was that she had been addressing, and addressing, too, on behalf of Tom Derragh. Tears of shame and vexation filled her sightless eyes, and she drew back instinctively from the table, as though that move could screen her from observation. Tom would have taken her hand, but she drew it away with a muttered "let me alone, will you?" As for Mr. Coulter, he sat looking at the mobile and most expressive features of the blind girl with mingled pity and admiration. He saw her truly feminine distress and was far too delicate to increase it by even a word. Turning to Con, he renewed his conversation with him, as though nothing had happened to break in upon it, although he still cast an occasional glance on Peggy, who sat silent and pensive a little behind the others.

"Do you expect to be located near your friend Bergen here?" said Mr. Coulter to Con.

"Well, I hope so, sir! His brother Felix—that's him that sent for him—has taken it in hands to get land for me, too, so it's likely he'll try and get it all together, if he can at all."

"What family has Paul Bergen?"

"He has only four children now, sir. He had another fine boy as you'd see in a day's walkin', but he was killed in the forepart of the winter by an unlucky blow of a stone from another little fellow about his own age."

"Dreadful! dreadful!" said Mr. Coulter; "what an overwhelming shock that must have been to the poor parents!"

"Well! it was, sir!" said Paul, who had overheard what passed; "it was a great heart-break entirely, but, of course, we had to get over it the best way we could. There was no use flyin' in the face of God about that or anything else. It was His will, or it wouldn't come across us."

Mr. Coulter said it was very true, but in his heart he wondered at the strong faith which sustained these poor people in all trials, even the heaviest and most afflicting.

"If Peter had only died a natural death, sir," said Nora, breaking silence for the first time, "I *think* we wouldn't have grieved as we did after him, for there's no knowin' what was before him if he had lived. Maybe it's what God was good to us in takin' him when he did, though, God help us! we couldn't think so at the time. Patsey! you villain! what's that you're doin'?" Her quick eye had detected the elder hope of her house in the stealthy abstraction of some choice morsel from Mrs. Dwyer's cupboard.

A general laugh followed, in the midst of which Patsey squatted on his seat and slyly closed the cupboard, looking as innocent and demure as though nothing had happened. His mother, unwilling to disturb the company, especially as Mr. Coulter was present, contented herself with shaking her fist at the

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culprit, who thereupon looked very sullen and very
indignant.

"I perceive that boy has a will of his own," ob-
served Mr. Coulter.

"Ah, then, faix, he has so, sir," said the father, half
proudly, half excusingly; "he's been amongst Yan-
kee children so long that he begins to think himself
a man already." Here a look from Nora reminded
Paul that he had made a great blunder. He colored
deeply, coughed once or twice, and cleared his throat
vigorously. "I meant to say, sir," he began, "that
poor Patsey has got some Yankee notions of inde-
pendence into his head, and thinks himself as good
any day he rises as his Irish father or mother. That's
not the way in the old country, sir! The father is
the master there as long as he lives, and the mother,
too, for that matter."

Mr. Coulter laughed good humoredly. "I know,"
said he, "that you Irish have a high notion of
parental authority, but don't you think you stretch
it too far at times? Are you not too hard on the
youngsters now and then?"

"Oh! begorra, we're not, sir!" said Paul, in a very
decided tone; "if we don't keep *them* down when
they're weak an' young, they'll keep *us* down when
they're big an' strong, an' us feeble an' old. Oh, be-
dad, Mr. Coulter, there's nothing like the rod if you
want to make good children an' have them grow up
good men an' women."

"Yes," said Andy, "there's no going beyond that, for the Holy Ghost tells us the same thing."

"The Holy Ghost!" repeated Mr. Coulter, in unqualified amazement; "were you ever talking to him, friend?"

"Oh! of course I wasn't, sir, but He says it in the Scripture, and that's all the same you know: 'He that hateth his child spareth the rod.' At home in Ireland, sir——"

Mr. Coulter stopped him short with "What do you know of the *Scriptures* at home in Ireland?"

"Oh! as to that," said Andy, with his grave smile, "it's not the fashion there to *talk* of it much—that's of the Scripture—but the people are taught to *act* on it. That's what makes all the difference between us and our neighbors, that they have it forever on their lips, but we have it in our hearts. And good reason why we should, for don't we hear it read and explained to us from our infancy up!"

"Humph!" said Mr. Coulter, "that's something new to me."

"That may be, sir, for it's new to many a one in these parts, but it's nothing new to us. I'd back old Father Hennessy, the Lord be good to him!—that was our old parish priest, sir, when I was a slip of a boy—again any preacher in this city for expounding the sacred text, and more shame for him if he hadn't it all at his finger-ends—that's the Bible, sir—when he was Professor of Scripture for as good as nine years in the Irish College in Paris. It was

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from him I learned most of what I know," continued Andy, with deep feeling, "and especially what little Scripture I have. May the Lord clothe his soul in glory this night, for he was like a father to me, and it wasn't his fault but that I'm a priest myself at this present hour."

The pious aspiration dictated by Andy's gratitude was fervently responded to by a simultaneous "Amen!" from all present, with the exception of Mr. Coulter, who respected the feeling which he could not understand. After a momentary silence, he abruptly said "good night!" and kindly shaking hands with Winny, then with Paul and his wife, to whom he wished a safe and pleasant journey, he requested Con to go with him a little way on his return home, as he wanted to speak to him in private. Con was on his feet in an instant, hat in hand.

"Good night, Mr. Dwyer," said the kind old gentleman, turning to that important personage; "as you are not leaving the city just now we shall meet again—at least I hope so."

When they had got a little way from the house, Mr. Coulter asked Con who and what the blind girl was, and how she was connected with that wild, dissipated-looking young man, in whom she seemed to take such interest.

Having heard all that Con knew on the subject, Mr. Coulter remarked that there was something past the common in that girl, and that it was a great pity to see her so wrapped up in a fellow who

could hardly understand the value of such a heart as hers.

"Well! I don't know as to that, sir," observed Con; "poor Tom seems to think a power of Peggy, and they say her word is law with him. They'd be married long ago only that Peggy won't trust him on account of the drink. And no wonder she wouldn't, for he's hardly ever a week at a time to say right sober."

"Has the girl been always blind?"

"Oh dear, no, sir! I have it from her own brother-in-law, that Barney Brady that you saw there to-night, that it was mindin' Tom in a long sickness he had in *his* house, that she got the cold that settled in her eyes and took the sight from her. She was a clean, likely little girl before that as you'd wish to see—so they tell me."

"I can well believe that," said Mr. Coulter, "for even now she is remarkably pretty. What a touching page of lowly life," he thought, "is here opened to our view! Truly has it been said that truth is stranger than fiction. But what a people are these Irish!—how inadequate are others to judge them or to form an estimate of the deep and earnest feelings which lie hidden in their hearts, often beneath a rough, unpromising exterior!"

"Do you know," he said to Con, "if they have ever taken this poor girl to any oculist?—has there ever been any attempt made to restore her sight?"

"Well! I b'lieve there was, sir! Tom laid out a

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but it seems it was all no use."

No more was said on the subject, for just then
Mr. Coulter insisted on Con's turning back. "You
have to start very early," said he, "and the sooner
you are in bed all the better. I have already given
you all the advice in my power, and have now only
to wish you that prosperity in your new undertaking
which your good conduct and steady industry so well
deserve. As for Winny, you need have no fears
about her. My sisters take a deep interest in her
welfare, and she will have a good home with them
till you are enabled to send for her with the rest of
your family. Farewell! if we should never meet
again, you will remember old Sam Coulter as one
who wished you well." There was a husky tone in
his voice that betrayed more emotion than he chose
to manifest in words. Shaking Con's hand warmly
and again, he was moving rapidly away, but Con
harried after him.

"So you're goin', sir," he got out with no small
difficulty, "an not a word of the money! You
never asked me when or how I'd pay it to the
ladies, nor neither did themselves, when I went to
bid them farewell, may the Lord in Heaven bless
them and you now and for evermore!"

"Neither my sisters nor myself thought it neces-
sary to exact any promises from you, Con!" said
Mr. Coulter, without turning his head, "we know
your honesty too well for that. Send it back when

you can, and according as you are able, but be sure don't distress yourself, my poor fellow! trying to send all or any part of it too soon. My sisters are in no need of the money, and so they requested me to tell you." So saying he quickened his pace once more, and Con seeing that he desired no further parley, stood looking after him till he was out of sight, murmuring prayers for him and his. When he could no longer see him he turned his steps towards his present home, with a heavy though hopeful heart.

As Mr. Coulter followed his homeward way, thinking of the humble friend with whom he had parted perhaps forever, he was accosted by a sturdy beggar, who solicited charity in the richest brogue of southern Ireland. At another time Mr. Coulter would have conscientiously refused to give a solitary cent, telling the able-bodied applicant to go to work, but now with his heart full of the O'Regan's, and Peggy Daly, and Tom Dorragh, and the harmless pedantry of Andy Dwyer, he was in no mood for refusing a dole to one of their countrymen. So he threw the man a quarter and walked on. Had he witnessed the surprise with which the glittering silver piece was picked up, and the fervor of gratitude with which a prayer for him was sent up to heaven—above all, had he heard the thrilling tone in which the poor man muttered "Now, Kitty, honey, I've got the price of the big loaf for you an' the children," he would have gone after the apparent beggar and

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doubled his gift. Little did the warm-hearted mer-
chant think that the poor fellow had been vainly
looking for work all the long day, and had only so-
licited charity when all else failed, in order to bring
home sustenance for his sick wife and her famishing
children.



CHAPTER XVIII.

PASS we now over the tearful separation of Con and Winny, the friendly admonitions of Andy Dwyer, the oft-repeated good wishes of his less imposing helpmate, and the promises exacted by those left behind that their friends would be sure to let them "know exactly what kind of a place it was that they were going to as soon as ever they got themselves settled." All this may be easily imagined, as also the flash of laudable ambition momentarily elicited in Tom Derragh's mind. "Well!" said he, "I know I'm a good-for-nothing fellow—that's plain—if I weren't I might be able to start with the rest of you, and give Barney a lift that would help him away, too—I know there a'nt nothing would please poor Peggy so well, for she never took to this here way of life we're in——"

"No, nor never will!" interrupted Peggy, with startling energy.

"Well! I know it, Peggy, I do, and you'll see if I don't set about trying to take you out of it. What do you all laugh at?—a'nt I young and strong yet?"

XVIII.

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"Oh! to be sure," said Peggy, with her usual coolness of manner, "we all know that—an' you were young an' strong ever since you came here. Sure I know myself you'll turn your back on the taverns for the time to come, an' give up dances and raffles an' all such things, an' you'll be off to the West in no time at all with lots of money in one pocket an' me in the other." The laugh which followed was gall and wormwood to Tom, who left the place "in a pet," as Anty said, after a silent shake hands with Con and each of the Bergens, senior and junior.

Let the reader draw upon his imagination for the long and tedious journey, (in those days principally by canal,) the surprise and delight with which our travellers first beheld the broad prairies of the West, stretching far and away to meet the boundless horizon, and dotted here and there with patches of woodland whose gigantic timber was matter of ceaseless wonder. Paul had written to his brother from Chicago, letting him know what day he might expect them all, and so the first person he saw at the office-door in Dubuque was Felix himself, who had come with two of his neighbors, each provided with a horse and wagon to convey the travellers home.

"Home!" repeated Paul, with a melancholy shake of the head which made Felix laugh.

"Home! yes, to be sure," said he, "isn't my home yours till you get one of your own? And

this decent boy, too," meaning Con, "he's just as welcome as you are, an' I'm sure that's as much as I could say. And so this is Nora, and these are the children—well! thanks be to God that I lived to see you all in Dubuque. You're welcome here, every one of you, and may the Lord grant you all sorts of happiness here and hereafter! Come along here, Nora, and take hold of my arm, till I get you all something to eat and drink. I'm sure you're a'most worn out after such a long journey. Boys," to his companions, "will you just go and give the horses a bite and then hurry back here, for we'll be starting as soon as we got some refreshment."

Thus bustling and talking Felix took the travelers to an eating-house, where he ordered a good substantial dinner for the whole party, and whilst it was being prepared, he had asked at least a hundred questions about "home" and about affairs in the East, which seemed to have made quite a noise in that part of the world. "Them natives," said he, "are playing the mischief there. It's a wonder to me that any Irishman—if he's a Catholic—would live amongst such a set. For my part, I'd sooner transport myself to Botany Bay. I wouldn't put up with such doings as they get on with—no, not on any account—so long as I had the means of getting away from amongst them."

By this time Thady Landrigan and Pat Mullins had returned and the dinner was soon after placed on the table. This was a welcome sight to all par-

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ning Con, "he's just as sure that's as much as is Nora, and these are be to God that I lived

You're welcome here, the Lord grant you all hereafter! Come along of my arm, till I get you drink. I'm sure you're a long journey. Boys," you just go and give the y back here, for we'll be come refreshment."

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ties, but especially to the children, whose appetites were whetted by the keen air and their long ride over the prairie in an open stage wagon. There was not a happier man in Iowa State that day than Felix Bergen, as he dispensed around the comforts for which he was to pay. He would glance occasionally at the brother from whom he had been so long separated as if to make sure that he was actually sitting there within a few feet of him and at the same table, then his eye would wander to Nora and her blooming progeny, and his joy *would* break out in words.

"Bless my soul, but I'm glad to see you all!—and so will Judy, too, for many a long look out she has had for you this time past. And I declare, Paul, you stand it bravely, after all. So does Nora, too, indeed, though you're neither so young nor so rosy—no, nor so light-hearted, neither, Nora, as when I seen you last. You were young then,—and so was I too!" he added with a sigh; "well! well! there's many a change in the world since then, and them old times are just like a dream as we look back at them. Now here's Con O'Regan, and he was a little fellow for all the world like Patsey there when I came out to this country. I was thinking and thinking what O'Regans he could be of, but since I see him I don't need to ask. You're a son of Tim O'Regan—him that was called Tim Beg—aren't you, Con?"

"I am, indeed, then," said Con, speaking with

suppressed emotion; "that was just my father's name."

"And your mother was Susy O'Connor, of the lake side, a daughter of old Cormac?"

"The same!"

"I knew it," cried Felix, "I could have sworn to you anywhere I'd meet you by reason of the likeness you have to your poor father—God rest his soul!—well! I owed you a good turn on your father's account, and though I didn't know at the time who you were, I chose you as good a lot of land as if I was choosing it for myself. It's pick and choose between yours and Paul's. But, Lord bless me, Thady, isn't it time we were starting?—run you and Pat and get out the wagons."

A few minutes saw them all fairly on the road, and after a pleasant ride of some three hours, they reached the snug homestead of Felix Bergen, where they were met with a whole concert of joyous gratulation from dogs of various sizes, even before Judy herself made her appearance, all in a glow with heat and excitement, for she had been cooking most of the day. The very personification of cordial welcome was Judy Bergen as she caught Nora in her arms, and then each of the children in succession, kissing them over and over.

All was now joyous bustle. Judy and her two rosy handmaids were "up to the eyes in business," some putting away the luggage, some cooking, and all asking numerous questions of Con about "the old

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country" from which he was the latest arrival. One
of the herdboys was sent to apprise the nearest
neighbors of the great event, and long before night-
fall several of them "dropt in" to see and welcome
the new-comers. Thady Landrigan and Pat Mul-
lins were, of course, kept for the evening, and right
willing they were to stay. When conversation be-
gan to flag somewhat, Felix cleared his throat for a
song to gratify Paul's often-expressed wish. "You
used to be a great singer, Felix," said he, after the
song was sung, "an' I see you're nothing failed yet.
But that's a great song entirely—where did you
happen on it?" It was Morris's fine song, "Life in
the West."

"Oh! then, myself could hardly tell you," said
his brother; "I b'lieve I learned it in some of the
cities. It's a sort of a favorite of mine."

"I like it well enough myself," observed Judy,
"but still and all it's not one of our own songs.
Can't you sing 'The Shannon Side,' or 'Molly
Astore,' or some of them fine old songs that you
used to sing at home, Felix, dear?"

"Oh bother to you, Judy," cried her husband,
good-humoredly; "between you and Paul," looking
affectionately at his brother, "you'd keep me sing-
ing all night. I vow to goodness but you would.
Here's Thady Landrigan hasn't sung e'er a song yet.
Come now, Thady! give us 'The Croppy Boy'—will
you?"

"Oh bedad I will, then," said Thady, "if it'll be

the last pleasure to the company. But sure myself has no voice worth speakin' of. Howsomer I'll try, at any rate. Mrs. Paul Bergen, ma'am, did you ever hear 'The Croppy Boy'?"

Nora answered in the affirmative, but expressed a longing desire to hear it again, "for," said she, "it does my heart good to hear any of the old songs, an' us so far away from where we used to hear them."

The song was sung accordingly, and sung with great sweetness and its full measure of mournful pathos, for Thady did himself injustice when he said he had no voice. When the last notes of the plaintive melody had died away, Nora wiped her eyes, and heaved a sympathetic sigh responsive to the touching "farewell" of the ill-fated hero of the song, one of the Wexford insurgents of '98:

"Farewell, father, and mother, too,
Sister Mary, I had but you;
Across the seas I would freely go,
To seek a fortune for my Mary O!"

Even Paul and Con had to clear their throats more than once before they ventured to thank Thady for his song. "Why, Thady," said Paul, with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, "if I could only sing half as well as you, I'd never be done singin'."

"It's well he can do that same," said Pat Mullins, who was a cousin of Thady's, winking slyly at Con, who was his next neighbor, "the sorra much else he's good for, the same boy."

"Never mind him, Con," cried Thady, with a

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"cried Thady, with a

good-natured laugh, as he bared his sinewy arm and held it up for examination; "don't you think that arm ought to be able to do something? The rap knows well enough what I can do, and you and Paul will soon know it, too, please God! for there isn't an Irish settler within ten miles of you but what I have given a hand to in my time. Nobody hereabouts thinks his house right put together unless Thady Landrigan is at the doin' of it. Only get the logs for your houses chopped and ready, an' I'm the boy that'll put them in their places in less than no time."

"Oh! well, begorra, Thady," said the waggish Mullins, "if a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow like you means to have a hand in it, we'll all do what we can. We'll get Tommy Doyle and Luke Foley and a lot of them fellows up in that direction, and here's Billy Cogan will lend a hand, too—won't you, Billy?" Billy nodded assent, for Billy was a man who spoke little and thought much.

"Well! then," resumed Pat, "we'll all come over here some day this week—let me see—Felix! what day will be the best for us to come?"

"Oh! well, whatever day answers yourselves. Judy here will be ready for you any day you come. She'll have you a comfortable bit to eat, you may be sure."

"Well! I'm no great cook, but I'll do my best," said Judy, with affected modesty, glancing, at the same time, with very justifiable pride over the evening meal wherewith she had just spread the board;

"I'll have lots of country cheer for you, and that's all I can promise." Somehow Judy's promise appeared to give general satisfaction. It might be that the princely ham, "red as a cherry," which graced one end of the board, and the dish of new-laid eggs, and the *mescain* of fresh butter and the pitcher of rich cream which flanked the files of gigantic tea-cups at the other end, had something to do in the cheerful resignation wherewith "the neighbors" approved of Mrs. Bergen's culinary labors, not to speak of the huge loaf of good home-made bread and the plate of cakes, smoking hot from the oven. Certain it is that the day for the great chopping was speedily settled on, and it was arranged that men enough should be gathered to chop the wood for the two houses. There was plenty of timber, Felix said, on both farms, but there was also a large proportion of level prairie, so that the houses could be put up at once.

"But you know, Con O'Regan's goin' to live with us for a while," said Nora; "we'll not let him live like a hermit all alone by himself. It'll be time enough for him to go to his own house next year when he'll be beginnin' to think of gettin' out his family."

"Oh! well, even so," observed Felix, "its best to have the timber chopped and shaped. It'll be all the better for lying over a while to season, and next fall we'll get the boys to come again and put up the

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house for Con. But there's Judy waiting for us, I see."

"Sit over now, all of you," said Mrs. Bergen, "and see if you can eat a bit. Come here, Nora, *alanna machree!* and sit beside me."

"Why, then, I declare," said Con, "we haven't the least occasion for anything now. We've been eatin' ever since we came."

"Nonsense, man!" cried Felix, who was already doing mighty execution on the ham aforesaid; "nonsense, man, do you think it's in the city you are still? You'll have to work hard here, I tell you, so you must eat whenever you get the chance. The air is mighty keen and sharp at times on these prairies, and it'll soon give you your appetite, I tell you. Sit over now at once and don't keep us waiting on your honors all day. Now Judy, my woman! be sure you give us a rousing cup of tea—if you don't, mind you'll catch it."

There was no resisting Felix's whole-hearted hospitality, so to it they all went, and it did Judy's heart good to see how well her good things were appreciated, though her modesty ~~was~~ a little tried now and then by the honest encomiums impartially divided between her cookery and the quality of her viands.

The evening passed merrily and quickly, with many detailed remembrances of the land so far distant and so dearly loved. The new-comers were entertained with stories of Western life calculated to

prepare them for what they had themselves to expect, the dangers to be avoided and the proper course to be pursued in forming homes and homesteads, raising crops, and all the rest. At length some one noticed that Janie and Patsey were nodding on either side of the huge chimney, and this was the signal for a general rising, for, "sure enough, it's tired they must all be, and in need of gettin' to their beds." A cordial good-night was thereupon exchanged, and the hardy settlers, calling to them their respective dogs, who had lain slumbering in various corners of the spacious kitchen, stepped out into the clear starlight of the prairie, with hearts light and free as the air they breathed. What though miles lay between them and their respective homes, they had health and strength and that buoyancy of spirit which is one of the prevailing characteristics of their race.

"But, I say, Felix," said our friend Thady, turning back on his heel after he had gone a few steps; "I say, a'nt Father Doran a-coming next Sunday?"

"Of course," was Felix's answer; "don't you know it's a fortnight since he was here? We'll have Mass, please God, as usual, at nine o'clock, so look sharp all of you and don't be comin' in when it's half over. And, do you hear, Thady!" going after him to the door, "his reverence will get in a Saturday evening this time, so he can hear any one that wants to go to confession. I was near forgettin' to tell you, and he bid me do it, for I was talking to him in town last

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Monday. Mind and tell as many as you can, now?"

"All right!" responded Thady, and away he went with rapid strides to overtake his companions, whistling as he went, "Old Ireland, a long farewell!"

"So, then, the priest comes here once a fortnight?" said Con, as Felix took a seat near the blazing hearth.

Felix replied in the affirmative, adding, "in the course of a year or two we're in hopes of having him settled here for good and all. Father Doran has hard enough times of it, poor man, for he has charge of two or three missions, and the sick calls are worse than all. There's times when he has to go forty or fifty miles to give the rites of the Church——"

"Do you tell me so?" cried Paul, in blank amazement, as he thought of the parishes in Ireland, perhaps four or six miles square.

"I do tell you so, and it's truth I tell you. Still he doesn't murmur; he says we must only look straight before us, and that God will make it all right in His own good time. He's so thankful—I mean Father Doran—to see the people settling down here on farms, and putting themselves in the way of serving both body and soul that he thinks no trouble too great."

"He's a good priest, then, is he?" inquired Con.

"Good!" cried Judy, "he's one of the finest men you ever laid an eye on. He has no more pride in him than a little child. You know it's with us he

stops whenever he comes the way, and I declare to you he's as easy pleased as any of our laboring men. The Lord's blessin' be about him ! But he'll be here on Saturday evenin', and you'll see what he is yourselves."

Here a yawn from Paul reminded the careful mistress of the mansion that the travellers needed rest. "I b'lieve we'll not mind sayin' the Rosary the night," said she, "as you're all so dead tired."

"Ah, then," said Nora, rousing herself from the drowsy fit into which she had been falling, "ah, then, indeed, it's not on our account you'll miss it. It's us that have a right to say it this night, when we've got safe to our journey's end."

"Very well," said Judy, "I'll just hang on a skillet of milk to make you a good posset. It'll be ready by the time the Rosary's said, and it'll do you all the good in life just to take it before you lie down."

On the following morning when our little party met at breakfast, Felix began to congratulate his brother on the fine family he had. Janie was still washing and combing the youngsters in the inner room, so that the children were not within hearing. Paul replied that they were well enough—clean, healthy children, he thanked God, "but there's that eldest boy," said he, "an' I can hardly keep him in bounds, at all, at all."

"Why, how is that, Paul?"

"Oh, then, bad cess to the one of me knows," returned Paul, dejectedly, "he was always of a

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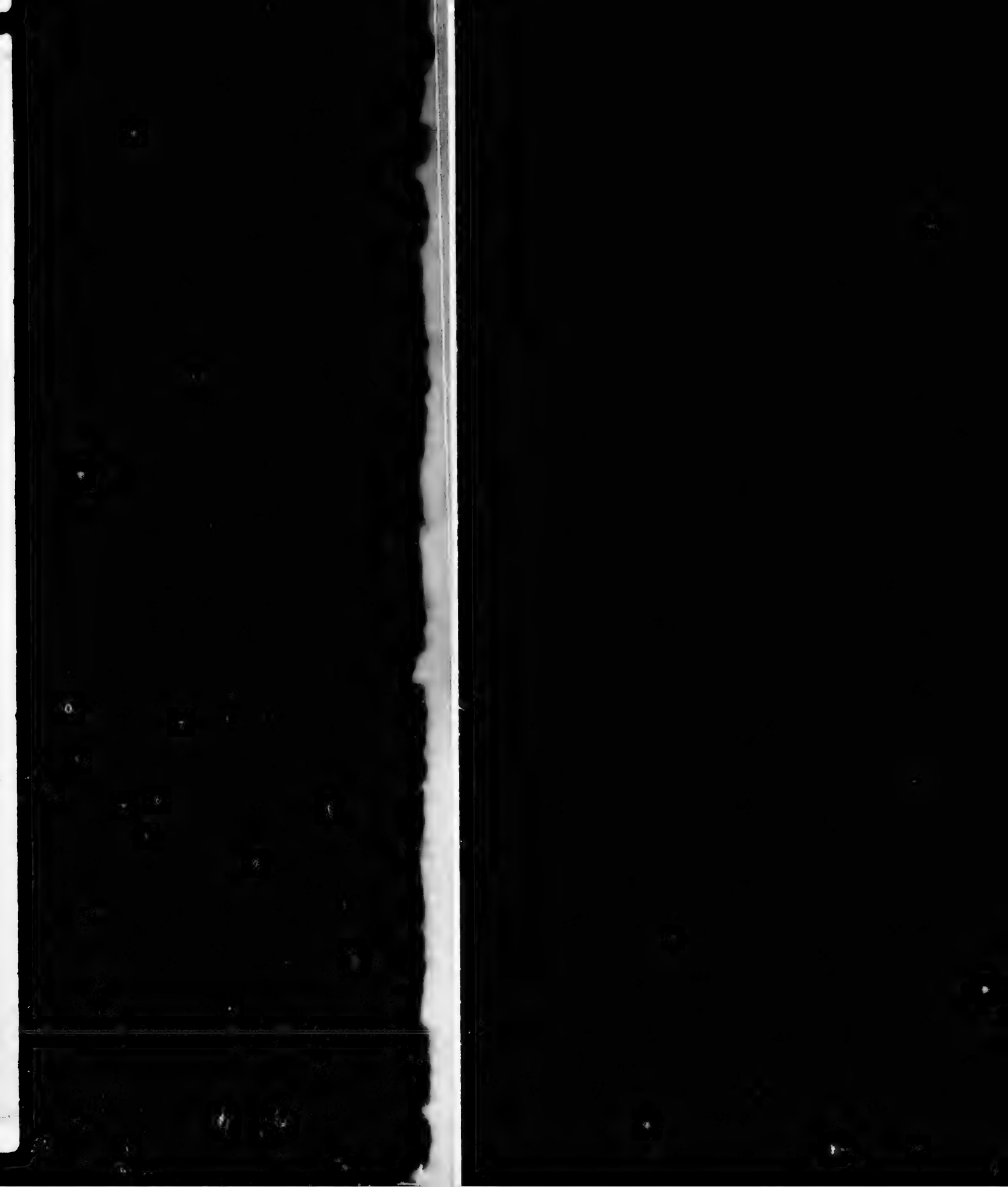
"Nonsense, man," interposed Nora, "you might
as well put the saddle on the right horse at onst.
It was *the streets* that made him as he is—the
streets an' the bad company he spent his time with.
An angel from heaven would soon be made as black
as the devil—God pardon me for sayin' so !—if he
was allowed the run of the streets in them vagabond
cities."

"And the schools, Mrs. Bergen !" added Con ;
"Andy Dwyer told me enough about them Common
Schools, as they call them, ay ! enough to make the
hair stand on one's head."

"Well ! Andy has a good right to know," ob-
served Nora, in answer ; "he's a sensible man and
has a power of larnin'. Somehow Paul here could
never get it into his head that there was any great
harm in them schools."

"Why, how could they be as bad as Andy would
make them out," replied Paul, in an apologetic tone,
"when the clergy aren't against them—at least
where we came from?"

"You do well to put that in," said his brother,
hastily, "for I've often heard from Father Doran
that the clergy are down on them State Schools
everywhere, as far as Catholics are concerned. He
says they're first-rate for doing the devil's work,
such as making away with the good seed out of the





soul and planting everything that's bad in its place. Ah! God bless his reverence, he's up to everything, and I'll engage he'll keep the wolf from *his* flock when once he's left in charge. He knows what's good for the people, and he'll see it carried out, or he'll know for what. But about this boy of yours, Paul!" he suddenly added.

"Well, yea, Felix!" said Paul, with a heavy sigh, "he's a great trouble to me, sure enough. God direct me what to do with him!"

"Humph!" cried Felix, with contemptuous brevity, "don't give yourself any farther trouble about him. Once away from his bad companions, he'll soon forget the tricks he larned among them. He'll soon leave off his pranks here, mind I tell you! You can keep him down *now* as much as you like, for he'll have no little self-conceited monkeys to prime him up with bad advice out of doors. I'll give you a hand, too, as long as he's in the house with me, and you'll see he'll soon be all right—that is, with the help of God."

During the latter part of this discourse, Judy had been telling Nora the number of her cows, sheep, fowls, &c., &c., to which Nora listened with great interest and no small admiration. "Why, then, but you must live in a great way here entirely!" she exclaimed; "will it ever come our lot, do you think we have anything like that?"

"To be sure it will!" cried Judy, "if you only work for it as we did, an' I'm sure you're well

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thing that's bad in its place. Hence, he's up to everything, keep the wolf from his flock in charge. He knows what's he'll see it carried out, or not about this boy of yours, and.

And Paul, with a heavy sigh, "me, sure enough. God didn't bring him!"

And, with contemptuous brevity, of any farther trouble about his bad companions, he'll be learned among them. He'll be here, mind I tell you! I know as much as you like, of self-conceited monkeys to advice out of doors. I'll be long as he's in the house with soon be all right—that is,

of this discourse, Judy had number of her cows, sheep, and Nora listened with great admiration. "Why, then, but the way here entirely!" she exclaimed, "do you think that?"

"I" cried Judy, "if you only do, an' I'm sure you're well

enough inclined. It's true you're not the stoutest in the world yourself, but then Paul's a strong, healthy man, and the children will soon be a great help to you. If you had only a couple of years over your head, there would be no fear of you, and then *you'll* not be as hard up as many others, because Felix and myself are so near you here. Thanks be to God! we have enough and to spare. Still and all, Nora, there's many a one we see here that's just hard enough set to get through the first year or so till the crops come in cleverly and the bit of a house is made fit to live in. But then, sure, isn't it worth their while to put up with some hardship for a while when they'll have the benefit of it all their life and their children after them? The first is always the worst with people here, but when they're fairly started they get on, most of them, as well as heart could wish. Here are the children coming in now. Won't you give them some of this nice milk porridge before their tea? I made it a purpose for them."

"Indeed then I will," said Nora, gratefully, "and it's it that'll be the treat for them!"

Breakfast being over, Felix asked Paul and Con if they wouldn't like to go and see their respective farms. "I have some oats to sow," said he, "before I go, but all I have to do won't take me more than a couple of hours."

"And we'll give you a hand both of us," said Con; "it'll do our hearts good I'm sure to get out

to work in the fields again. You'll give us our first lesson in Western farming."

"And me, too," cried Patsey, making haste to bolt down the last spoonfuls of his porridge; "I guess I'll go, too."

"No, Patsey," said his mother, "you'll stay with Auntyan' me for this time. Some other day you can go out with the men. I want you to play with Jim an' the baby."

"No, I won't," said Patsey, with all his precocious firmness; "Jane may play with the young ones. I'll go with father and uncle."

"Patsey!" said his father, sternly, "you can't go with us when your mother wants you here."

"Yes! I will go!" shouted the boy, putting himself into an attitude; "I never saw folks working in fields and I want to go see them now."

"What's that you say, Patsey," said his uncle, slowly; "do you mean to say that you'll not obey either your father or mother?"

"I want to go out with you," repeated Patsey, doggedly.

"Didn't your father and mother both forbid you to go?"

"Oh! that a'nt any matter!—I can go if I like." Now Patsey calculated on having an immunity from punishment at least for some days after arriving at his uncle's, and he wished to show off as independently as possible, but his uncle fixed a look on him

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that made him quail as he had hardly ever quailed
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"Now, I'll tell you what it is, my fine fellow!"
said Felix, putting on a stern dignity that was by no
means his own, and speaking in slow, measured ac-
cents, "never let me hear you speak so again, or I'll
make your father hire you out to a farmer to mind
the cattle, where you'll have to sleep in an out-house
all alone by yourself. We'll neither beat nor abuse
you, but we'll turn you over to the strangers where
you'll soon be broken in."

Patsey stood looking up at his uncle in gaping
wonder, his mouth and eyes wide open, and a sort
of half-smile on his face. He evidently wished to
believe his uncle only in jest. Looking furtively
round, too, his quick eye detected a smile on Con's
face, as he stood rather behind Paul, and that con-
firmed the astute urobin in his pre-conceived notion.
Assuming, therefore, a swaggering tone, he turned
again to his uncle, determined to let him see that he
had caught a Tartar. "Ha! ha! uncle! I a'n't so
green as you take me for. I guess I know about as
much as other folks. You can't do me so easy as
you think. I tell you I will go!"

"And I tell you, you shan't!" returned the uncle,
now really angry, while Judy raised her hands and
eyes in mute horror; "just put these city tricks
out of your head altogether, my good boy, or so
sure as my name is Felix Bergen, I'll do as I said
this very day. Off you go, depend upon it! You

needn't look at me that way, for I tell you I'm in earnest, as you'll find to your cost before you're many days older. I'll not have a curse drawn down on my little place by harboring a disobedient, undutiful son. Mind that now, my boy, and just take your choice. Either make up your mind to obey your father and mother—aye, and your aunt and me, too, or I'll saddle a horse this very evening, and leave you over with Jack Quigley, five or six miles across the prairie. He's just in want of a little fellow about your size to herd his sheep and cattle. He's the man will soon settle you, depend upon it."

"Ah! then, Felix dear, don't be so hard on the child," interrupted Judy; "he didn't mean any harm, I know well enough, an' I'll go bail for him that he'll not act so again. If he does, you may have your own way with him, but a first offence ought to be passed over."

"Ah! God help your wit, Judy," said Nora, sadly, "it's little you know about the same lad. If it *was* the first offence of the kind for him, I'd be the first to put in a word for him, but ooh! ooh! it isn't the first of a hundred. He has no more respect for what we say to him than if we were two black niggers." And by this time her tears attested the sincerity and depth of her affliction.

"Do you see that now, Patsey?" said his uncle, in a husky voice; "do you see that?—what punishment would be too great for a son that grieves his mother's heart by his undutiful conduct?—I tell

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way, for I tell you I'm in your coat before you're have a curse drawn down over a disobedient, un-ow, my boy, and just take up your mind to obey me, and your aunt and me, this very evening, and Quigley, five or six miles just in want of a little feller to herd his sheep and cattle. Little you, depend upon it." "don't be so hard on the "he didn't mean any harm, I'll go bail for him that he'll does, you may have your first offence ought to be

t, Judy," said Nora, sadly, at the same lad. If it was and for him, I'd be the first but ooh! ooh! it isn't the has no more respect for if we were two black niggers her tears attested the affliction.

Patsey?" said his uncle, see that?—what punishment for a son that grieves his dutiful conduct?—I tell

you there's not a boy round here that wouldn't shun you like a plague if they knew you to turn your tongue on father or mother."

Between his mother's tears and his uncle's threats, Patsey was fairly at a stand, and the natural obstinacy of his disposition was softened down. Going over to his mother he said in a low tone: "Mother, just tell uncle, will you? that I won't act so again. Don't cry so—don't now—I don't like to see you cry." A tender caress was the mother's answer, and she had no need to repeat the message to Felix, that worthy man had heard it, every word, and the smile which brightened his sun-browned cheek said as plainly as possible, "My scheme has succeeded even better than I expected." So winking at Con and Paul, he took down his hat, and telling Patsey he was glad to see him coming to his senses, he led the way to one of the out-houses where the farming utensils were kept.

"Well, Paul!" said he, "what do you think of that for a beginning?"

"First-rate, Felix!—I declare you brought him to in double quick time, an' without as much as one stroke!"

"Oh! as to the strokes," observed Felix, "I wouldn't on any account lay a hand on him—that's your business and his mother's, not mine. But I just meant to let him see that such work would never do here. That's all. And mark my words, he'll not forget the lesson in haste, because he'll

find it backed up by the habits of the people all round him. He'll not be long here till he gets ashamed of his notions of independence. He came here yesterday a little *man*, but we'll soon make him a little *boy*. Come along now, both of you. We've lost some time, but we can soon make up for it—many hands, you know, make light work, and, when the oats is safe in the ground, we'll get a bit of dinner, and then hurrah! for your farms!—I'll show you this very day the greatest sight you ever saw, that is, a little estate of your own that neither landlord, nor proctor, nor cess-man, nor tax-gatherer, can ever lay claim to. Isn't that worth something?"

"And who may I thank for it?" said Paul, in a tremulous voice.

"Pooh! pooh!" cried Felix, "I suppose you'll be for thanking *me*, and Con there his good friends in the city, but it's God that has done it all. Thank Him, then, and not *me*. Blessed be His name, He has done as much for me as for any one, and I'm sure there's no one less deserving of His favors. But here we are—here's the ground all ready, and fine soil you see it is, too. So now let us set to at once and we'll be through the sooner."



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CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Con and Paul were taken in succession to survey their new possessions, they could hardly believe their eyes that it was wild land on which they looked. The undulating surface of the prairie was covered with the delicate herbage of Spring, green and soft as that which carpets the valleys of the Emerald Isle. The fairest and brightest-tinted flowers were scattered around in rich profusion, and altogether the scene had that pastoral character which belongs to a high state of cultivation. At the northern extremity of the two farms was a grove of considerable extent, its strangely-mingled foliage presenting one mass of freshest verdure of every shade and tint.* In addition to this there was a

* "The attraction of the prairie consists in its extent, its carpet of verdure and flowers, its undulating surface, its groves, and the fringe of timber by which it is surrounded." . . . "In the Spring of the year, when the young grass has just covered the ground with a carpet of delicate green, and especially if the sun is rising from behind a distant swell of the plain and glittering upon the dew drops, no scene can be more lovely to the eye." . . . "The gaiety of the prairie, its embellish-

small clump of trees on Con's farm, and where their shade fell deepest across the plain, his fertile imagination instantly reared a smiling cottage, the future home of all he loved on earth. His eyes filled with tears, but they were not tears of sadness, for his heart was full of joyous anticipation.

As for Paul, he could only gaze, and wonder, and admire. Everything was so new to him, so different from what he had expected, that the whole seemed a pleasing dream rather than a broad reality. And Felix stood and looked alternately at both, enjoying their surprise, a benevolent smile brightening his weather-bronzed features, and his hands crossed behind his back. At last Paul turned towards him, with a "Well! well! if this doesn't bate all!"

"What do you mean?" asked Felix.

Why, to think of me bein' the owner of such a farm as this!—me that had to pay a high rent for a cellar in Hope street only two weeks ago! Why, Felix, a body has nothing to do but just dig up the ground an' put in his crop!"

"Not even that, my good fellow," said Felix, with a chuckling laugh, "you haven't to do that same—you have only to get it ploughed up once, and then sow your seed in drills—a second ploughing covers it up, and then the work is done. But then you

ments, and the absence of the gloom and savage wildness of the forest, all contribute to dispel the feeling of loneliness which usually creeps over the mind of the solitary traveller in the wilderness."—*Iowa as It Is* 1855, p. 26.

have to fence it in, and that's the greatest difficulty you'll have, but you'll have good help at it, please God, and we'll get some of the fence-rails in that grove for both your lots. The rest we can get from a man a few miles down from here that I trade with from time to time. He has lots of that article, and he takes grain or cattle, or most any sort of produce in exchange. Well, Con! what are you thinking of? I see you're eyeing that cluster of trees very attentively—are you thinking of cutting them down, or what?"

"Oh! by the laws, no!" replied Con, with unwonted energy; "I was thinkin' what a beautiful place that'll be for the house, an' how joyful poor Winny an' the wife will be when they see it all. Well, sure enough, but God is good to us!—and the best of it is," added Con, quickly, "that we'll be all our own masters here. There's nobody to drive or push us, an' if we work, it'll be for ourselves, not for others! Now, Paul, if we could only see Andy Dwyer, and Barney Brady here, and poor Tom Deragh, we'd be all right!"

"Oh! well, as to that," said the more phlegmatic Paul, "we may thank God that we're here ourselves. Everybody can't be in it!"

Felix laughed. "That's you all over, Paul! I see that you're still the same cool customer that you always were. But I wish to God," he added, with sudden seriousness, "that we had more of our own people out here. This is the place for them, and

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not the smoky, dirty suburbs of the cities, where they're smothered for the want of pure air, and, worse than all, where they get into all sorts of ugly scrapes by reason of the bad company they fall in with, and the bad example they see wherever they turn. I declare to you when I get a-thinking of all these things, I feel so mad at them for being blinded as they are, that I could almost deny them for my countrymen, but, then, again, when I come to think better of it, sure it isn't them that's in fault, it all comes from their simplicity, and sometimes, I suppose, for the want of means. But here's Patsey, I protest. Hillo! Patsey, what's the matter?"

The little fellow could hardly draw his breath. "My aunt—sent—sent me—to tell you—to tell you—that the priest's come. She wants you home—as fast as you can!"

"All right, Patsey!—but how did you find us out—eh! my little man?"

"Oh! sure wasn't I standing on the little hill near the house looking after you, and sometimes I felt like following you, but—but——"

"But you were afraid," said his uncle, laughing and winking at Con.

"Well! I wan't afraid, uncle, but I thought you might be vexed, so I just staid where I was, till Auntie called Dinny to send after you, and so I told her which way you went, and that I'd go."

"That's a good boy, Patsey," said his father, patting his head, "never do anything that you think

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would displease your father or mother, or your
uncle or aunt."

"Why, father," said Patsey, lowering his voice
somewhat, "only think! Dinny tells me that no boy
round about here would keep company with any
one that disobeyed father or mother—he says a boy
that did that would be called a *black sheep*. A'n't
it queer, father?"

"Not a bit, Patsey, not a bit," said his father,
endeavoring to conceal his exultation; "that's the
way it is amongst Christians everywhere. At
home in Ireland, such a thing is hardly ever heard
of as children, either boys or girls, turnin' their
tongue on their parents. If they did they'd be
made an example of. Mind now and be nice and
mannerly when the priest speaks to you. Don't
forget who he is!"

Patsey then fell behind to join Con who was
walking on alone thinking of the almost measureless
distance which lay between him and those he loved
the best. Patsey, however, was too full of his own
subject to pay much attention to the other's ab-
stracted air.

"Well, now, Con, a'n't it queer?" he began.

"What?" demanded Con, in a half-conscious
tone.

"Why, there's Dinny, the herd-boy, has jest bin
a telling me that boys musn't dare talk back to
father or mother here. It seems none of the boys

hereabouts would play with a feller that did, for that it breaks the fourth commandment."

"Well! and what is there strange in that?" said Con, now much interested in the subject; "didn't you know before Dinny told you, that it was very wrong, and a great sin, to disobey either of your parents?"

"O! yes, I heard it," said Patsey, with a careless toss of his head, "but I didn't mind—it was father and mother that told me, and you know *they'd* say it anyhow, but then Jake Hampton and all the others said it was all moonshine, and that a father or mother had no *right* to flog a feller because he happened to be *their* son. They said there was no law for it, and that no boy need stand it, if he hadn't a mind to. I guess they were about right after all, and I'm real sorry I ever came here at all—I am!—Jake Hampton wanted me not to, and if I was only back again, you'd never catch me in such a place, I tell you."

"Why, Patsey!" cried Con, in amazement, "I thought you were getting ever so good, and would never be a bad, disorderly boy again!"

"Oh! that's all a sham," was Patsey's quick response; "I wanted to *do* uncle, you know, and so I jest made believe that I meant to do what they'd tell me for the time to come, but I guess I'll be off from here when I get the chance, and go back to Jake Hampton. But mind you don't tell, Con!" he

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quickly added, "if you do—I shan't ever forgive
you—that's all!"

They were now at the door, so Con merely
nodded as he followed the precocious urchin into
the house.

Father Doran was seated near the fire in a high-
backed chair of rustic fashion. He was a man in
the decline of life, but still hale and hearty, as any
one might see at a glance from the healthy hue of
his weather-darkened features and the quick intelli-
gence of his clear grey eyes, gleaming, or rather
beaming, in the shade of thick and rather bushy
eyebrows. There was no great polish perceptible
in Father Doran's manner, but there was that about
him which commanded respect and sufficiently in-
dicated the clergyman and the man of education.
Still, from his constant association with the farming
classes, he had either acquired or assumed a certain
blunt, direct way of speaking, which, together with
a dash of drollery, made him quite a favorite with
the people who respected and admired his virtues
as a priest and as a man. He had already made the
acquaintance of Nora and her children, with the ex-
ception of Patsey, and, after a few words of cordial
welcome to Con and Paul, who were introduced by
Felix, he held out his hand to the boy, who took
good care to obtain a prominent position.

"How do you do, my little man? I'm glad to see
you in Iowa. What's your name?"

"Folks call me Patsey, but my name is Patrick—Patrick Bergen."

"Well! Patrick, you have a good name, at all events—the best name an Irishman or an Irish boy *could* have. I hope you will be a credit to your name."

Patsey hastened to set the priest right. "But I a'n't an Irish boy—I was born in B——."

"Oh! ho!" said the priest, who began to smell a rat, as Judy afterwards said; "so you're not Irish, eh? Then they had no business to call you Patrick, and I wouldn't put up with it if I were you."

"I don't mean to," said Patsey, eagerly, completely deceived by the ironical gravity of the good priest; "when I come to be a man I'll have folks call me a prettier name."

"Oh! you will, eh?—and what name will you take, my little fellow?"

"Well! I ha'nt right made up my mind," said Patsey, with quite a meditative air; "I guess Washington's about the best——"

"Or Parker," suggested the priest, gravely; "wouldn't that go well—Parker Bergen, eh?"

"First-rate!" cried the boy, clapping his hands in high glee, but his pleasurable excitement was only of short duration, for his father, unable to bear it any longer, suddenly caught him by the back of the neck, and, giving him a good hearty shake, told him to go about his business, or he'd give him *Parker Bergen* on a place where he wouldn't like it.

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Patsey slunk away confounded and ashamed, while
his father hastened to apologize to the priest.

"I hope your reverence will excuse him," said he,
"on account of the bad way we had heretofore of
bringin' him up. He was most of his time on the
streets, sir, for when I was away at my work his
poor mother couldn't be runnin' after him, an' I
needn't tell you what sort of company he fell in
with on the streets of B——. Still, I hope in God
he's not so far gone but what he can be reclaimed,
when he's away from his former companions an' in
a place where he can always have something to
do."

"Never fear, Paul, never fear!" said Father
Doran, cheerfully, "he's the making of a fine manly
fellow, and you'll not be long here till you see a
great change in him. For my part, I am not the
least surprised to hear him talk so. It was just as
natural for him to imbibe such notions from the ele-
ments by which he was surrounded as it is for a fish
to learn to swim. Your other children seem quiet
and docile."

"Indeed they are, your reverence," put in Nora,
eagerly; "though I say it, they're good children—
that's Janie and Jim here, an' the poor fellow we
lost, too, he was a different boy from Patsey, alto-
gether, an' wasn't half so hard to manage. The only
thing we had again him was that he was too fond
of the streets, an' ooh! ooh! sure it was *that* that
brought him to his end—*farrer gar*, it was!"

After administering a few kind words of consolation to poor Nora, Father Doran turned to our friend Con and inquired whether he was married or single, what family he had, and other such questions, to all of which Con gave short, direct answers, displaying so much good sense and good manners that the priest began to regard him with unusual interest. Pressing his inquiries a little farther, he gradually drew out the history of Con's good fortune, and heard his account of Winny, "the best of sisters," as the brother fondly called her. All this was highly satisfactory, and served to raise the young man still higher in the estimation of his new pastor.

"Well, Con," said he, rising from his seat, "I am very glad to see you here! it is just such men as you we want to found new colonies in these magnificent regions: men who will hand down to their children the Christian virtues and the Christian faith pure and unsullied as they came to them from their pious ancestors. Mrs. Bergen, I should like to retire for a while to read my office, if you will secure me from invasion."

"But, dear bless me, Father Doran, sure you must first get something to eat. I have a nice chicken cooking there in the oven, and it'll be dore in less than no time. After that you can be as quiet as you like—not a soul I'll let in on you if it was the governor himself."

"Excuse me, my worthy hostess," said the priest, with a smile, "I shall be through before your chicken

is cooked. What I have to read now will not keep me long, and then I can pay my respects to your bill of fare."

In the course of the evening, when it drew near sun down, one and another began to drop in to go to confession. The men were all in their working clothes, having merely taken time to wash hands and face and make their hair somewhat smooth. Amongst the twelve or fifteen who arrived in succession there were some of all ages and of both sexes, all more or less collected in their demeanor. Last of all came in Thady Landrigan, and Con could not help saying to him in a tone of surprise: "Why I thought you were to be some miles away at work to-day!"

"Well! and sure so I was!—what of that?"

"Why, nothing, only I didn't expect to see you here this evening—that's all!"

"Oh! I see," said Thady, forgetting for the moment his gravity and recollection; "I see what you're up to. I suppose you thought me such a wild, harum-scarum fellow, that I wouldn't think of kneeling under a priest. But I'm not quite so bad as you seem to take me for. God forgive me, I was a scapegrace long enough, and it's little comfort the poor mother there had with me," pointing as he spoke to a comfortably-clad old woman whose silvery hairs gave dignity to her mien as they showed from under a close-bordered cap and a neat black silk bonnet. The look of affectionate pride which

accompanied these words were not lost on Con, as Thady proceeded: "But that was when I was loafing about in the cities, watching for a day's work, and keeping—not the best company, in my leisure hours, you may be sure—*then* I couldn't bear the thoughts of going to my duty, and many a battle my mother and me had about it, but now, thank God! it comes as easy to me as if I was only saying my prayers."

The room door now opened, and one penitent coming out another went in, whereupon Thady, perceiving that his turn was drawing near, applied himself again to his book and his self-examination. However much Con might have been inclined to reflect on what he had just heard, he was fain to banish all such distractions from his mind for that time, as he, too, was preparing for confession: Still, he could not help saying to himself as he turned the leaves of his prayer-book:

"If it was out here poor Tom Derragh had spent his ten years what a different man he'd be now!—and even such lads as Smith or Houlahan—would they have been as they are if they had been brought up in a quiet country-place, among their own people?" The answer was a heavy sigh from the depth of his own heart.

Next morning, Father Doran's little chapel was crowded with earnest simple worshippers, and as Con O'Regan looked around from the grey-haired priest at the altar to the men, women, and children,

who composed the congregation, some telling their beads devoutly, and others poring intently over the pages of their well worn prayer-books, he could almost fancy himself at home in his own parish, with Father Halligan saying Mass. There was nothing strange in the scene, but everything home-like and familiar. The very bareness of the walls and the poverty of the place made it more like his own chapel of Ballymullen, and the very light as it penetrated through the high, narrow windows on either side, had a softened mellow hue that reminded him of the hazy sunshine of his own dear land. Near him knelt Paul and Nora Bergen, and he could see that they, too, were carried back into the tranquil past, for Paul's bluff face had a serious yet softened look far different from its wonted character, and Nora's mild eyes were filled with tears as they rested on the colored engraving, one side of the altar, representing St. Patrick on the hill of Howth banishing the snakes and toads which crawl in ugly motion around his feet.*

Before Father Doran set out that afternoon to return to his distant dwelling, he presided at the hospitable board of Felix Bergen, Judy having got

* This legend is of rather an apocryphal character, yet coming down to us with the stamp of antiquity, it is little wonder that the people—the simple and the unlearned—give it implicit credence. There is every reason to suppose that the absence of venomous reptiles in Ireland is owing to some peculiar quality in the soil.

up a twelve o'clock dinner for the priest. A few of the oldest and most respectable of the neighbors were kept for dinner, and Felix would have invited double the number had there been any possibility of seating so large a company with even tolerable comfort to themselves.

As soon as dinner was over Father Doran said grace, and then stood up from the table, observing that there were some of his parishioners to meet him at five o'clock, on business, so that he was obliged to leave sooner than he would wish. No one could think of staying a moment at the table after the priest left, so, notwithstanding divers winks and nods from Felix, the company all pushed back their chairs and manifested an intention to "be on the move."

As Father Doran passed out through the kitchen, accompanied by Felix, he encountered Patsey, who was sitting on the floor amusing the baby, Janie being occupied waiting on the guests. Great as the priest's hurry was he could not pass without putting a few questions to the boy, in whom he felt somewhat interested.

"Do you know your catechism, Patrick?"

"My catechism!" repeated Patsey, looking up in surprise; then, as he slowly took in the meaning of the question, he replied with much coolness:

"Yes, I guess I know some of it. Mother made me learn it to home Sunday evenings."

"And did you not learn it in Church, or in school?"

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"Oh no!" and Patsey laughed lightly; "there
wan't any catechism taught in school, and I hardly
ever went to Church to catechism."

"And why not?" said the priest, with a winning
smile, and speaking in the softest tone he could
command.

The child looked up for a moment as if to examine
the countenance of his interrogator, then, probably
encouraged by what he saw there, he hastily replied:

"Well, I don't mind telling *you*, 'cause I know
you'll not tell father or mother. You see Jake
Hampton and a' the boys used to wait for me
Sunday afternoons at the corner jest below our
house—you know that corner, don't you?—well,
they'd have always something on hands just then,
and they couldn't git along no how without me,
and when I'd tell them that I was a-going to cate-
chism they'd all laugh so that I used to feel real
bad, and so they'd take me along wherever they
wanted to go, and I'd forget all about the catechism
till it was jest time to go home, and then I'd run
ever so fast to git home in time, and mother never
knew but what I was at Church. Poor Jake
Hampton!" added Patsey, with a deep-drawn sigh,
"I wonder how he gits along now when he ha'nt
me to go with him? He's a brick, is Jake Hamp-
ton, every inch of him!"

"Would you like to go to school, Patsey?" de-
manded the priest, after regarding the boy with a
pitying look for a few seconds.

"To school!" cried Patsey, with indignant emphasis; "I guess not! There a'nt any schools out here fit to go to. Jake Hampton said so."

"Oh! never mind what Jake Hampton said," rejoined the priest, with his cool, satirical smile; "I'll have you a good school, soon, depend upon it, where the catechism shall be taught, and where you will learn to be a good boy, and grow up a good man. Good-bye, Patsey, my boy! I hope to hear a good account of you when I come again."

Felix had gone out at the commencement of this little dialogue, and now appeared at the front door with the priest's horse. Independent land-owner as Felix Bergen was, he considered it a high honor to wait upon Father Doran, so high, indeed, that he could never be prevailed upon to let Dinny or any one else do for him anything that he could do.

"And why wouldn't I?" he used to say; "isn't it proud and happy I am to have a place for his reverence to stop in, and good stabling for his horse? Isn't it a great honor entirely for a poor ignorant man like me to have the Lord's anointed under my roof?" So, on this principle, both Felix and Judy thought they never could do half enough for his reverence, in return for the high and distinctive honor his presence conferred upon them.

Most of the guests left soon after the priest, as many of them had a long way to go, but Mrs. Landrigan and her son were prevailed upon to stay for the evening, as also Pat Mullins. The latter attached

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himself to Con, who was much amused by his quaint drollery. His cousin Thady was usually the butt of his harmless raillery, but on this occasion he "kept his tongue off him," as he said to Con, "on account of his being at communion in the morning. I never spare him at other times," observed Pat, "for, to tell the truth, he's such a good-hearted slob of a fellow that he never takes it ill, no matter what I say to him, but, of coorse, I can't be carrying on to-day with him as I would at another time."

"What's the matter with your hand, Thady?" said Mrs. Felix Bergen; "I see you have it tied up there."

"Oh! it's only a scratch," said Thady, carelessly, "nothing worth speaking of."

"Why, now, listen to what he says!" cried his mother, who was smoking her pipe in Felix's high-backed chair in the chimney corner; "indeed, Mrs. Bergen dear, it's bad enough it is with him. He has a very sore hand entirely."

"And how did he get it, at all?"

"Why, you see, he was down with a lot of the boys at widow Moran's, puttin' up a barn for the crature, as she has no man-body to help her, an' it was in the dusk of the evenin' they were doin' it, after their work was over at home; so poor Thady there was cuttin' at a wedge with a big knife, and what would you have of it, ma'am, but the knife slipped a one side, an' gave him a terrible cut. I'm afeard it'll be a hand to him this many a day."

"Pooh, pooh, mother, you're always so easy frightened," said Thady, with a look of affectionate reproach; "please God, I'll be able to give Paul Bergen a hand at the putting up of his house a Thursday next. There's nothing the matter with my hand but what a couple of days will cure."

"Not a hand or hand you'll give me, Thady, all day a Thursday!" put in Paul; "you must just keep quiet till that hand gets well—such things are not to be played with, I can tell you!"

"Well, at any rate," said Thady, "if I'm not able to help you on Thursday, which, please God, I will, you'll have to put off the job till the week after, for I promised to give you a hand, and I will, too, if I'm a living man."

"Well! well! Thady, anything at all to please you," said Felix, jocosely; "I know of old that you'd have your own way, no matter what comes or goes. But, tell me this, Pat Mullins—did you ever hear from that foolish brother-in-law of yours since he went away? I always forgot to ask you."

"Hear from him!" cried Pat, with a sudden change of manner; "is it him to write a scrawl to any one, the graceless vagabond!—oh, no! there isn't that much good in him. He went back to Philadelphia, you know, against the advice of his father and mother, though I seen them myself as good as goin' down on their knees to him not to go, but the devil had too fast a grip of him to let him be said or led by them that was for his good, and, if

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ple, and tould them not to fret about him, for that
if he wasn't back in three weeks he'd write.—You
know the cant word people used to have at home.—
Poor Phelim and Nerry! they never raised their
heads since, nor won't, till they go to their graves,
let that be long or short. Ah! God isn't in heaven,
or that fellow will be made an example of before
ever he leaves this world."

"God send he mayn't!" said Felix, with deep feel-
ing; "I wouldn't be in his place for a mint o' money."

"Nor I neither," observed Thady; "the wildest
day ever I was I could never go the length of that,
though, God knows, I was bad enough. However,
it was the best of Lanty's play to clear off from here
if he meant to carry on in that way, for no decent
boy round here would have anything to say to him
while he made so little of his parents. None of us
cared much about him at the best, for we used to
think there was something very light in him. He
could never content himself here, either, but was al-
ways jibing at everything he saw, and had no respect
for any one!"

Patsey was sitting in the corner beyond Mrs.
Landrigan listening to this conversation, with eyes
and mouth wide open. Turning eagerly from one
to the other of the speakers, he swallowed every
word, and when Thady had concluded this last
speech, he drew a long breath, and looking round
met his mother's eyes fixed full upon him. Blush-

ing like scarlet, the little fellow slunk farther into his corner, and Nora nudged her husband, who sat near her, and made a sign for him to look at Patsey. A glance of joyful meaning revealed to each the hopes which both began already to entertain. If all this did not make an impression on Patsey's mind, then nothing ever could.



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CHAPTER XX.

THREE years had passed away since Con O'Regan and his friends heard their first Mass in Iowa. Many more homesteads dotted the smiling face of the prairie, and amongst them were two owned respectively by Paul Lergen and Con O'Regan. In the shade of the clump of maples stood the small but comfortable cottage put up for Con in the course of the first year by the ready and willing hands of Thady Landrigan and his "neighbor boys." Round it spread the rich and well-tilled fields, already carefully inclosed, where a succession of crops was in progress the whole year round. It was the beginning of May, and in that mild climate, the oats, and corn, and wheat were already above ground, while in one portion of a large field, the early potatoes were raising their dark-green tops, in promise of a luxuriant harvest. In a pen at a short distance from the house were some three or four first-rate hogs fattening to kill, while several others of inferior size roamed at will, regaling themselves on the mud of the farmyard. A handsome young horse was frisking and gambolling in a pasture close by, in company

with three or four good milch cows. Behind the house was a garden of moderate size, planted half with early potatoes, and in the farther corner, partly hidden at that noontide hour by the deep shade of the neighboring trees, was Con himself hard at work planting cabbages, or, as he would say himself, "putting down plants." And within doors, all was life and animation. A fair young matron, small, and neat and tidy, was moving lightly about preparing the mid-day meal, whose savory odor scented all the air within and around the house. Two pretty children were seated on low stools near the fire enjoying with much apparent relish the soup which their mother had just dealt out to them. These three were "Biddy and the children," so often talked of, and so long expected. But where was Winny, our earliest acquaintance of all the O'Regans?—where but in her brother's corner, with a piece of needlework in her hand, and a very handsome grey pussy purring and dozing on her knee. And Winny's face was no longer pale, nor her eyes no longer sad and downcast, as she raised them to her sister-in-law's face with a happy smile.

"Well, now, Biddy!" said she, laying down her work for the moment on pussy's back, "well, now, Biddy, I'd give a trifle of my own to know who that schoolmaster is that Father Doran's getting out. His reverence is keeping it mighty close, though he gives us a hint now and then that we'll be glad to see him when he comes."

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milch cows. Behind the moderate size, planted half the farther corner, partly our by the deep shade of Con himself hard at work would say himself, "put-within doors, all was life young matron, small, and lightly about preparing savory odor scented all the house. Two pretty low stools near the fire ent relish the soup which dealt out to them. These children," so often talked

But where was Winny, of all the O'Regans?—'s corner, with a piece of and a very handsome grey g on her knee. And Winale, nor her eyes no longer raised them to her sister's smile.

said she, laying down her pussy's back, "well, now, my own to know who that father Doran's getting out. it mighty close, though he then that we'll be glad to

"Oh! it's all plain enough to me," replied Biddy, who rather piqued herself on her clear-sightedness; "he's getting him out from somewhere near our own place at home. I'd wager a trifle, Winny dear, that it's ould Dominick Shannon that was teachin' school for Father Staunton, when Con left home, up at Killorgan. He was doing nothing when I came out only goin' from one farmer's house to another teachin' the children after hours. As sure as anything it's him that Father Doran is gettin' out, for I was talkin' to him myself about him!"

"Well! I don't know, I'm sure," said Winny, with a thoughtful air, "but I wish he was come at any rate, for the children round here are badly in want of him. Not but what Cormac Dillon does his best with them, but that isn't much, poor man! for he hasn't the learning himself. Still he teaches them to read and write."

"And teaches them their catechism, too," observed Biddy, "and their prayers, and sure that itself is a great thing. Run out, Micky," to her eldest child, "and call your father—he must be in need of his dinner by this time!"

"Did you hear the news?" said Con, as he washed his hands in preparation for dinner.

"No!" said one, and "no!" said the other; "what in the world is it?"

"Why, the new schoolmaster is at Dnubque. Father Doran sent word for a couple of us to go out with wagons for him and his family."

"Why, then, are you in earnest, Con," said his wife, forgetting the lateness of the hour in the engrossing interest of the news; "well, I think I know who he is?"

"You!" cried her husband, "why, how would you know, Biddy astore?"

"Oh! never mind that," said Biddy, with a sagacious nod of her little head, "I know and that's enough. Ask Winny if I don't!"

Con looked at his sister who smiled and said, "I have only her own word for it. She thinks it's Dominick Shannon that used to teach the Killorgau school."

This made Con laugh heartily. "You might just as well expect to see Slievebeg itself out here," said he, "as old Dominick Shannon."

"Well! well!" persisted Biddy, "time will tell! You'll see whether you or I'm right. But are you going to Dubuque, Con?"

"I believe not, then, for Paul Bergen and Tommy Mulligan offered to go, and that's enough, Felix says. I'm just as well pleased not to have to go on account of them plants I'm putting down. With God's help I'll get them finished to-morrow. Glory be to God, aren't they altered times with us all, Winny?—and to think that it's only three years since we first came out here!"

"Dear knows," said Winny, in her soft, calm voice, as she looked around on the small but neat and comfortable kitchen in which they were assem-

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bled, and then glanced out through the window at the fresh and tufted foliage of the trees through which the sunbeams were now struggling; "dear knows, Con! I often think and think of it till it seems to fade away into a dream. Often and often when I take the children out for a run on the pasture, and sit down with my knitting or sewing under one of the trees abroad, I feel the tears coming into my eyes, not tears of sorrow, you may be sure, but my heart is so full of peace, and I'm so happy and so contented. Everything looks so quiet all around and the church and the priest's new house just in sight, and all the houses as far as I can see belongin' to friends and acquaintances—ah! Con," she added, and her voice faltered with emotion, "ah, Con! if our poor mother was only alive now, how happy we could make her here! But sure," and she wiped away a tear, "but sure I hope she's happier even than we are. May the Lord receive her soul in glory!"

"Amen!" responded Con and Biddy, and for a few moments nothing more was said. The mention of the beloved and lamented dead raised the thoughts of all for a brief space from the narrow sphere around them. Memory was busy with the brother and sister, at least, as they fondly thought of the mother they had lost. But there was no bitterness in their feelings. Time had softened down the grief of each, and they could look back with mournful pleasure on the long-vanished years

when their little circle revolved round that precious centre, a loving and beloved—a Christian mother.

"Well, after all," said Biddy, blessing herself and rising from the table, "there's no use frettin' about them that's gone. It'll be our own turn one day or another, and God grant we may be as well prepared as she was."

"Don't you think, Con," said Winny, "that we ought to have a letter from Mr. Coulter by this time?—how long is it now since you sent him that money?"

"Why, indeed, it's long enough for me to have had an answer. I'm beginnin' to be real uneasy for fear my letter went astray. But sure it couldn't, after all, for Father Doran directed it for me with his own hand, and, of course, he put on the right direction."

"Oh! there's not the least danger of it going astray—I'm sure of that," said Winny, "but somehow I'm afraid there's some reason for Mr. Coulter not writing. There's something wrong, you may depend upon it, or he wouldn't be this long without answering your letter. I hope in God he's not sick!"

A shade of anxiety passed over Con's face, but he affected to laugh at Winny's fears. "Well, now, Winny, that's you all over. You're always frettin' about something. I'll engage Mr. Coulter's as well as any of us here. What would ail him, I want to know? But this will never do for me! Come along

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out to the garden, children,—you can play in the shade." The children were glad of the invitation, and scampered off in search of their straw hats, which Judy Bergen had plaited for them with her own hands.

Although Con did not say so to Winny, he began to fear that something had really happened to Mr. Coulter, and he made it his business that evening, after his day's work was over, to go to the Post Office, which was about two miles distant. There he found a letter from his kind benefactor, which justified, while it relieved, all his fears. The old gentleman had received Con's letter, and had duly handed over to his sisters the draft of a hundred dollars enclosed in it. For himself, he said, he would have acknowledged its receipt sooner, were it not that he had had an alarming fit of apoplexy, from the effects of which he was but just recovering. "And tell Winny," he added, "that Dr. Richards got his dismissal from the house. I managed that point anyhow, sick as I was, for I never liked the rascal since a certain affair took place. You do not know what I mean, Con, but Winny knows well enough. I know you'll be all frightened to hear of how near going I was, but, for the present, there's no more danger, the doctor says. I suppose I may look out for the next attack, but, meanwhile, I must only drive dull care away. 'Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die'—that's the handwriting on the wall, you see. Pooh! pooh! what am I

writing about to Con O'Regan! I forgot, you see, that you were *only* Con O'Regan. Well! after all, you may know more of the Scripture than one would suppose, for I found out long ago that you have Daniels among you to expound the enigmas of the Holy Book. Talking of that, I was making inquiries some time ago for your friend Dwyer—was not that his name?—but I could find no trace of him. The place that knew him knows him no more. I was told he had left the city, but where he was gone, no one that I met could tell me. Well! I should like to see you all in that happy home which you describe in such glowing colors. I saw you—both you and Winny—in your hours of darkness—ay! and your little wife, too, when she found that you weren't here before her, and I would give something to see you as you are now. That pleasure, however, I shall never enjoy. Never—never! But, never mind, I'll live as long as I can, and when I must go, I suppose I must, and there's an end of it. Mrs. Coulter made a great fuss about the state of my soul, as she called it, and would insist on my having Irving to pray with me, but I cut her pretty short, I tell you. I never gave in to cant or hypocrisy all my life, and I mean to die as I have lived! an honest man, and no sham. When you hear of my death, Con, be sure that I died just as I tell you, without fear or dread. If there be another world, (which I am half inclined to doubt,) why, I am quite willing to take my chance in it, for I think I have done my

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SAMUEL COULTER.

"P.S.—My sisters are well, and jogging along
through life, as usual, with Letty at their heels.
Poor Letty got bit lately by some mad preacher—a
Millerite, or something of the kind, and ever since
my sisters are bored to death with her pious rav-
ings. Still she's about the same good-natured crea-
ture she ever was, and often talks of you and Winny.
My sisters are well pleased to hear of your doing so
well, and they say you need not have been in such
a hurry sending the money. But I say, you're quite
right to lessen your debt as soon as you can. If
you made any *unnecessary* delay—mind I say *unne-
cessary*—you wouldn't be the man I take you for.
Tell Winny that the girls often speak of her, espe-
cially Rachel, and Mrs. Coulter often admits with
(I think) a remorseful sigh that Winny O'Regan
was a faithful servant. Time for her to find it out,
was it not?"

By the time Con had finished reading this epistle
the tears were streaming from Winny's eyes. "The
Lord be praised!" she cried, "that he got over it
this turn anyhow! It might please God to change
his heart and open his eyes to the truth before he
takes him out of this world. How lightly he talks
of death, poor dear man!—because he knows noth-
ing of the judgment that's to come after it! May

the Lord save him from an ill end ! Ah ! I knew—
I *knew* there was something wrong with him !”

“ And me, too, Winny,” said her brother, “ though I didn’t own it. Thanks be to God, things aren’t as bad, after all, as they might be. Sure they say that apoplexy is mighty dangerous, and takes people off very suddenly. I hope the master will never have another turn of it, though he seems to dread it.”

“ Well ! I’d be sorry for anything bad to come on him,” observed Biddy, who had just come in from milking ; “ he’s a fine ould gentleman, dear knows ! but then he mightn’t call me a little wife—I’m sure it’s no disgrace to be little, and I suppose I’m as well to be seen as them that’s far bigger.”

Biddy was evidently hurt by the unlucky allusion in the letter to her diminutive stature, and it took some reasoning from both Con and Winny to convince her that Mr. Coulter meant nothing but what was kind. However, she was at length persuaded, and volunteered a promise to say a *pater* and *ave* every day that Mr. Coulter mightn’t be taken short, and might get the grace of a happy death.

Knowing that Biddy, though the best and dearest of wives, and the kindest of sisters, was none of the most discreet in her conversation, Con took no notice at that time of the allusion to Dr. Richards, but the first time he and Winny were alone together, he pressed her so close with questions that she was obliged to tell him the whole affair, and from

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the deep, though suppressed anger which she saw
legibly written on his expressive face, Winny was
very thankful that he heard it then for the first
time.

"Well!" said Con, speaking very slowly, "there's
no use talkin' about it now when the rascal is so far
out of my reach, but if I had only known it in time
—well! I wouldn't wish to hurt him, villain an' all
as he is!—but I'd have wrung his nose for him, if I
had to go to his own office to do it!"

"And what good would that have done either
you or me, Con dear?" said his sister, mildly;
"you might only have got yourself into trouble,
and that was the very reason why I never let you
know anything of it. But, never mind Dr. Richards,
Con, I forgive him from my heart, and may God
forgive him!—just come here and look at the sham-
rock—run in, Micky, my pet! and see if your
mother can come out a while!" It was in the
garden, and "the young May moon" was shining in
meridian splendor.

Away ran Micky, who returned in a very few
minutes with his mother by the hand, little Winny
hanging by her skirt at the other side.

"What's this?" cried Biddy, as she drew near;
"Micky came for me in a great hurry, sayin' that
his aunt wanted me."

"And so I do, Biddy dear," and Winny putting
her arm within hers drew her towards a shady nook,
now illumined by the soft moonlight. "I want te

show you how well our shamrock is thriving." Now Biddy had brought this shamrock root all the way from Ireland, and that at her husband's special request, so she felt deeply interested in its welfare, and great was her joy when she found that it had spread considerably, and wore as bright a green as though it were still on some Irish hill-side. She had of late forgotten it altogether, but not so with Winny, who had watered and tended it with unceasing care. Even Con had latterly lost sight of the precious plant, and as Winny happened to be taking care of Mrs. Landrigan, who was seriously ill, when St. Patrick's Day came round, strange to say he never once thought of his native shamrock, although the day was as well celebrated as Father Doran's means would permit.

"Well! I declare now, Winny, that's great!" exclaimed Biddy, bending fondly over the charmed spot; "why, I thought it would never grow half so well here as at home, and that I mayn't do an ill turn! but it's as green as a leek, and greener, too, for that matter!"

"Well! sure enough, it's a great thing," said Con, "that we have a rare Irish shamrock growin' in our garden. I must bring a root of it to Father Doran the first time I'm passin' that way. But I think I'll just take a run over to Paul Bergan's and see how they're gettin' on there. Paul will be startin' to-morrow for Dubuque, and I want to send

for some little things. Weren't you sayin' you wanted tea, Biddy?"

Biddy did want tea, and sugar, too, and Winny wanted something else, so Con went off charged with some half a dozen commissions for Paul. A few minutes' walk brought him to the end of his journey, where Paul Bergen's farmhouse stood on the top of a gentle eminence overhanging a limpid stream. Behind it were two or three outhouses, a barn, a stable, and a milkhouse, or dairy, all white as lime could make them. The house itself stood a little back from the road, and the space in front was covered with fresh grass, forming a little bleach-green, which Nora valued as highly as any other of her possessions. When Con reached the low fence which divided Paul's tenement from the high road, he stopped a moment and leaned over the little gate, surveying at his leisure the various features of the scene as they lay calm and bright in the moonlight. And as he gazed, memory brought back the cellar in Hope street, where he had first seen Paul Bergen and his family. He thought of Nora as he then saw her, shivering over a fireless stove with a pale, sickly babe in her arms. He thought of the night of Peter's death, when Paul sat carousing with his boon companions in one corner, squandering almost his last shilling, while his child lay gasping and moaning in another, and his wretched wife watching by her son with a world of unmitigated anguish preying on her inmost heart.

He thought of the little naked children, and the mother almost as poorly clad, while Paul was spending his hard earnings in Phil McDermott's bar-room, or some other such Bacchanalian haunt. And again he looked on the smiling scene before him—the snug and rather spacious farmhouse with the fire-light flickering brightly through the kitchen window, the little patch of grass-plot in front, and behind, houses full of cattle, and grain, and the various produce of a fertile and well-tilled farm. And Con asked himself was all this real? was Paul Bergen indeed the owner of all he saw, and a fervent aspiration of gratitude rose from his heart as he murmured, “yes! thank God! he is—Paul owns every stick and stone of it, and though it's a fine place and a comfortable place to boot, my own is not far behind it. The Lord in Heaven be praised for His wonderful goodness to us.”

So saying, he opened the gate, and then the door, and entered the house with a “God save all here!”

“Why, then, God save you kindly, is it yourself that's in it, Con?” said Nora from her station in the chimney-corner, where she sat knitting a stocking, the light from the blazing hearth giving a warm glow to her comely face and person. On the other side sat Paul, engaged in fabricating a rod basket.

“It *is* myself, and nobody else,” replied Con, as he drew a chair towards the fire; “I heard you were for going to town to-morrow, Paul, so I just slipped over with some messages from Biddy. These women

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are always wanting something, I declare. Hillo,
Patsey! what are you about there?"

"He's learnin' his catechism," said his mother;
"he can't read very well, you know, but Father
Doran promised him a nice picture if he'd learn a
lesson of it for him between this and Sunday. He's
so busy all day, poor fellow! workin' out with his
father, that it's only in the evenings he can get at it."

"Poor Patsey!" said Con, in a tone of mock
sympathy, "he has to work harder here than if he
was still in the city. It's a poor thing, after all, to
live in the country. Isn't it, Patsey?"

"No, indeed," said Patsey, quickly, "I like the
country far better than the town. Father never
lets me do any work that I'm not able for, and I like
to help him with whatever he's at. I wouldn't go
back now to the city if they were to give me ever
so. Boys like me have got nothing to do there, and
I'd rather be at work."

"And what about Jake Hampton and all the
others?" asked Con, winking at Paul; "wouldn't
you like to see them again? I thought you meant
to go back to them as soon as you got the chance!"

"Oh! I hadn't any sense then," said Patsey, with
a deep blush. "I don't want to see any of them
fellows now. They were bad boys, all of them.
Why, Con, if you'd only hear the wicked talk that
they used to have, and how they'd curse and swear
—and there wasn't one of them Irish—not one."

"Well! Patsey," said Con, "I'm well pleased to

hear you speak so, for I think they ~~were~~ bad boys—worse than any you'll ever meet out here."

"That's because they have nothing to do," said Patsey; "they're on the streets most of their time, you know, and they see all sorts of badness there. If they were out hoeing and weeding in the field or in the garden all day as I am, they wouldn't have half the wickedness in them."

"I can hoe, too!" put in little Jim, who was barely seven years old.

"You!" said Con, in affected surprise; "you don't say so, Jim?"

"Yes I can—ask mother if I didn't help her and Janie to hoe the garden!—didn't I now, mother?"

"You did, indeed, my son," and his mother fondly patted his head where he sat beside her on a low stool, making a "grenadier's cap" of rushes. "We could never have got it done without you, Jim, and your father must bring you a nice new cap to-morrow from Dubuque. You're the best little worker about the house."

"But what about this new schoolmaster," inquired Con, turning to Paul; "do you know anything about him?"

"Oh! not a thing," said Paul; "how should I know anything about him?—he's some acquaintance of Father Doran's, you know yourself, and that's just as much as I know. He'll make the boys and girls look sharp at any rate."

"Now, bother to you, Paul!" cried Nora, with a

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smile, "why will you be frightening the children that
way?—see how Patsey looks at you!"

"Oh! it don't frighten me, mother," said Patsey;
"I'll try and learn well when I go to school, and then
I'm sure the master won't be cross. But what will
father do without me?" he suddenly added, for the
little fellow had got an idea that his assistance was
necessary to his father.

"Oh! never mind that, Patsey," said the proud
and happy father, "your schoolin' mustn't be neg-
lected, let what will come or go. There's too much
time lost already."

"Oh well! sure I can do a good deal before and
after school," said Patsey, joyfully; "I'll not be all
day away." This difficulty obviated, Patsey again
applied himself to his book. Nora then made a sign
to Con to sit over near her.

"Is it true what I hear," said she, in a low voice,
"that Winny and Thady Landrigan are pulling a
chord together?"

Con laughed. "Well! I'm sure I can hardly tell
you," said he; "I know very well that Thady has a
liking for Winny, and *she* thinks a good deal of *him*,
but whether it'll ever come to anything between
them, I don't know."

"I know myself," went on Nora, "that the old
woman would be well pleased if it *did* come to pass,
for she thinks the sun rises and sets on Winny.
And I tell you one thing, Con, between you and me,
Winny wouldn't make a bad hit of it, if she got

Thady. He's the heart and soul of a good boy, and has a fine place, too, with not a cent of debt on it."

To this Con agreed, adding that for what he had seen of Thady, he thought very well of him, "and, indeed," he added, with a glowing cheek, "there's not many that I'd think good enough for Winny—you know that well, Mrs. Bergen!"

"I do, Con, I do, indeed!" said Nora, warmly; "I know the heart you have to Winny, and I know she deserves it all. But sure you're not a-going, are you?" seeing him stand up.

"Indeed, then, I am," said Con, "and it's about time. I know this man of yours will have to be early on the road. Good night to you all!"

"Won't I go a piece with you?" said Paul, rising up from amongst his rods.

"Not a step, then! Do you think I'd be seen walking the road with the likes of you? Just stay at your basket, for I see it's near finished, and a real beauty it is, too, I know myself. It looks for all the world like the creels we used to carry the turf in at home—now doesn't it, Mrs. Bergen?"

"An' what if it does," interposed Paul; "isn't that just what I wanted it to look like? Get out of my house after that, as fast as ever you can, or I don't know what I'll be tempted to do! It will become you, I'm sure, to make little of the creels!" And he shook his fist at him in assumed anger.

Con affected to be in a great hurry to make his escape, crying, "Let me out, let me out, will you?"

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—Paul's a terrible man when he's angered!" On
reaching the door he turned back on his heel, say-
ing: "If you please, Mrs. Bergen! don't let him
forget Biddy's messages!—there would be no stand-
ing her if he forgot the tea! she'd be savage on my
hands, just like himself!" And with another "good
night" in Irish, he bounded through the doorway.
But Patsey and Jim were after him before he had
reached the gate.

"Why, Patsey, what in the world are you about?"
said Con, with some surprise; "I thought you
couldn't spare a minute from the catechism!"

"Oh! I can spare time enough to go a piece with
you—me and Jim. I nearly know my lesson now,
and I'll be glad to have a little walk in this clear
moonlight."

"But did you ask leave to come, children?"

"Oh, of course, we did—you don't think we'd
come *without* leave? Both father and mother told
us to come."

"Well! well! step out, then," said Con; "you
may just come as far as the big maple tree yonder"—
it was a solitary maple which stood on the roadside,
the remains, perhaps, of a stately group. "And
now," said Con, "I can tell you something that I
know you'll like to hear."

The boys were all attention in a moment. "Do
you know," said Con, "that we have some roots of
Irish shamrock in our garden? Biddy brought out
one with her planted in a little bit of a box, and it

has grown so well that we have quite a little plot of it. I forgot to tell them at your house, but I mean to give your mother a root."

This was said partly to test the children's feelings on the subject, and Con was agreeably surprised to see how they caught at the news. "What's that you say, Con?" cried Patsey; "is it a real, real shamrock all the way from Ireland?"

"Just so!" said Con, whereupon little Jim clapped his hands and cried: "Now, we'll have a real shamrock for next St. Patrick's Day!—oh! I'm so glad!"

"And me, too," added Patsey. "I wish we could only keep our root from father's sight till we'd give him a fine bunch of shamrock next St. Patrick's Day—eh, Jim?"

"Well! you can if you wish," said Con, "for tomorrow when your father's gone you can come over for it, and just plant it in some little private spot in the garden where he'll never notice it."

"And you won't tell father, or mother, or any of them?"

"Oh! not a word," said Con; "never fear but I'll keep your secret."

"Now, mind, Jim, you'll not tell either, will you?" said Patsey to his brother with great earnestness.

Jim was quite willing to give the required promise on condition that he was allowed to give a bunch to his mother, as Patsey was to present one to their father. Just then they reached the maple

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tree, whose gigantic shadow was flung far over into the adjoining field, and Con would not suffer the boys to go any farther. All the way home the brothers kept talking about the shamrock and how carefully they were to keep the secret, and how delighted their father and mother would be when they gave them each a bunch on St. Patrick's morning before they went out to church. Long before they reached home, too, they had decided on the very spot where the shamrock was to be planted, and said Patsey: "We'll call that our little Ireland, because it's such a pretty place, the prettiest on all our land,—oh, won't it be fine, Jim?" It was also debated whether Jane was to be admitted into their confidence, but on the whole they thought it hardly safe, as they knew she couldn't keep anything from "mother."

It was with a lightsome heart and a buoyant step that Con O'Regan traced his homeward way, exulting in the thoughts that his children were to be brought up in the same pure, moral atmosphere, and under the same healthy influences that had changed the little Yankee rowdy into a genuine Irish boy, full of the traditionary virtues of his people, and susceptible of every noble and generous feeling. While musing on this agreeable subject two female figures appeared in the distance on the solitary road, and Con was at no loss to recognize the tall, graceful form of Winny, and the fairy-like proportions of his little helpmate. They were coming to meet him he

knew very well, so hastening his steps he quickly came up to them.

"Why, then, in the name of goodness, is it yourselves that's in it?" he laughingly asked; "I thought it might be a pair of ghosts. Aren't you afeard to be out so late by yourselves in this strange country?"

"Ah then, what would we be afraid of?" responded Winny, in the same playful tone; "sure there's nobody here to do us hurt or harm?—after we got the children to bed we just thought we'd take a little walk to see if we'd meet you. How are they all at Paul Bergen's?"

"All well—as well as can be."

So saying, Con opened the door of his own house, and a few minutes after they were all three kneeling at the Rosary.



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CHAPTER XXI.

On the following evening, about five o'clock, a neighbor who was passing Con's door with some oats for the mill, stopped opposite where Con was working in the field, and called to him that the new schoolmaster had arrived and that he was wanted at Paul Bergen's as fast as he could go.

"Bless my soul!" said Con, as he repeated the message to Winny and his wife, "aren't they in a great hurry? One would think it was for life and death, and so Neddy Branigan said when he was telling me. He said they seemed all in a bustle at Paul's. At any rate, I must start off, and you needn't wait for me to supper, for I know I'll have to take mine at Paul's." So having made himself "a little decent," as Winny said, he hurried away to pay his respects to the stranger and welcome him to their new settlement. As he passed by Father Doran's house, a pretty cottage adjoining the Church, he found the priest walking to and fro on a little verandah in front of the house. He was reading, and Con would not have disturbed him with any salutation, but all at once he raised his eyes, and said:

"Good evening, Con!—I see you're in a hurry."

"A good evening kindly to your reverence!—I am, then, in a hurry, Father Doran, for it seems Paul's got back with the new master, and they want me over to see him."

"And right glad you'll be to see him, too," said the priest, with one of his waggish smiles. "Dominick Shannon is a fine old fellow, although, I dare say, you stand indebted to him for many a good castigation."

"So then it is Dominick Shannon, after all!" exclaimed Con; "well! I thought the old man would be in heaven by this time instead of coming out here. It's mighty queer, so it is."

"Queer!" repeated Father Doran, with his dry laugh; "not a bit queer—he'll be able to explain it all to your satisfaction. He'll give you chapter and verse for it, I promise you! Hurry on, now, for I know they're expecting you."

Con shrugged his shoulders, but said no more, seeing that the priest had already resumed his reading. On reaching Paul Bergen's, Con saw Patsey and Jim at some distance in the field, playing by the banks of the stream with some other children, amongst whom was a boy bigger and stronger than Patsey. "Can these be old Shannon's children?" said he to himself; "surely he had neither wife nor children when I knew him!" The youngsters were too much engaged with their sport to notice Con, so he passed on and opened the little gate. The

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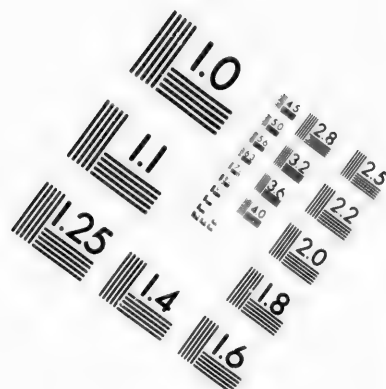
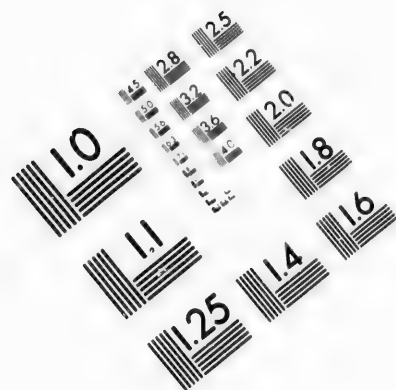
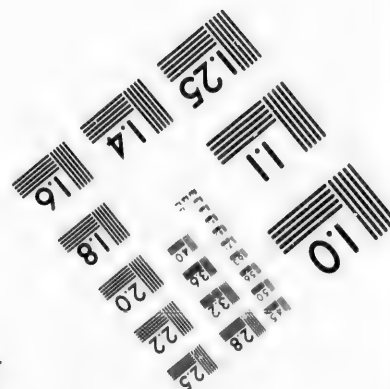
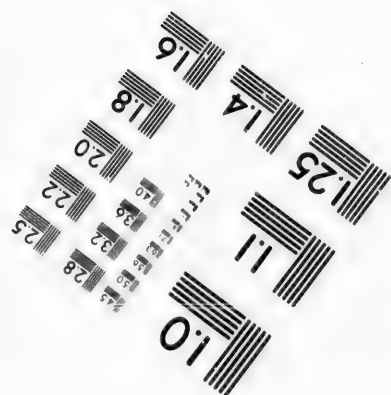
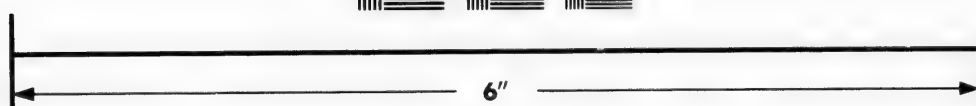
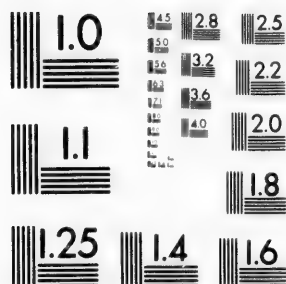


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hum of voices came from within, and as Con stopped a moment to collect his thoughts, he fancied that other familiar tones besides those of Paul and Nora fell upon his ear.

"Well! of course," said he, "if old Dominick's in it, I ought to know *his* voice," so he placed his hand on the latch, and just then he heard one say within:

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, Margaret—remember that, my poor girl, and you will see in your heavy sorrow a blessing in disguise!" Con waited to hear no more. The door opened before him, and he rushed in, then stood a moment in breathless amazement, anxious yet unable to speak. There before him, in all his habitual gravity, stood Andy Dwyer, with both hands outstretched in friendly greeting, and beside Paul Bergen sat Peggy Daly, with Nora's youngest child on her knee.

"Well, the Lord be praised!" cried Con, as he warmly shook Andy by the two hands, and gazed inquiringly into his now smiling face; "is this you, Andy Dwyer, or am I only in a dream?" and he turned his eyes on Paul, who nodded and smiled, but said nothing.

"It is myself and no other, Cornelius," said Andy at length; "I am happy to say that you are under no delusion, for I am here even in my own proper person. And here is another old acquaintance. Margaret, my child, here is Cornelius O'Regan!"

"I—I—am glad—to hear him speak again," murmured Peggy, in a faint voice, as she stood up and made a step or two forward. "I am indeed, Con, very, very glad, and Tom would have been glad to see you too. He always liked you, Con, though he never took your advice." Con shook hands with Peggy, who sank heavily on her seat and covered her face with both hands.

"I'm glad to see you in Iowa, Peggy," said Con, after an embarrassed silence, during which he had been trying to think what all this could mean, "and Tom—I hope he's here, too!" A burst of tears was Peggy's answer, and Andy, taking Con by the arm, drew him one side, where he told him in a whisper to say no more on that subject.

"Poor Tom," said he, "is gone the way of all flesh, and a sudden death he met, too—may the Lord have mercy on his soul!—only for that, poor Margaret wouldn't be here. Never mention his name at all to her, unless she speaks of him herself."

Con was horrified to hear of Tom's death, and a sudden death besides, but he made an effort to forget it for the time, and asked for Mrs. Dwyer and the children.

"Oh! they're all well—very well, indeed," said Andy; "the children are all out on an exploring expedition with the young Bergens, and I believe Alice is gone with Mrs. Bergen to visit her dairy. Altered times these with all of you, Cornelius!"

"Altered, indeed!" said Con, still speaking in an

him speak again," murmured, as she stood up and

"I am indeed, Con, I could have been glad to see you, Con, though he shook hands with her seat and covered

own, Peggy," said Con, during which he had said this could mean, "and so!" A burst of tears came, taking Con by the throat where he told him in a few words that subject.

"I've gone the way of all fathers here, too—may the Lord be with you!—only for that, poor fellow. Never mention his name again, he speaks of him herself." "I'm sorry for Tom's death, and I made an effort to forget it for Mrs. Dwyer and

"Very well, indeed," said Con, all out on an exploring mission to Bergens, and I believe I'll visit her dairy. I'll be glad to see you, Cornelius!" Con, still speaking in an

abstracted tone, for he had not yet got over his bewilderment; "but how did you all get here, and where's the schoolmaster?"

This last question was addressed to Paul, who thrust his hands in his pockets and laughed in Con's face. "Where would he be?" said he, "only in Andy Dwyer's shoes there?—don't you think he'll make as good a master as Dominick Shannon the best day ever he saw?—oh now, Con?"

"Why, to be sure he will," said Con, cheerfully, "for he knows far more than ever poor Shannon did. But, is it possible, Andy, that it was for you Father Doran sent?"

"It is not only possible but true," replied Andy, "and I believe he kept the secret from you just to play a trick on you. He was ever and always fond of practical jokes, God bless his kind heart! He sent for us all—every one—and you may be sure Alice and myself were nothing loath to avail ourselves of his goodness. So, if you'll have me," he added, with a smile, "I'll come to train up your rising generation 'in the way they should go,' as the Wise Man has it."

Another warm shake of the hand was Con's answer, and just then the back door opening gave admission to Mrs. Dwyer and her happy hostess, the latter carrying a dish of thick cream. It is needless to say that Con and Mrs. Dwyer were mutually glad to meet again under such favorable auspices, and that joy was depicted on every face,

with the single exception of poor Peggy, on whose features an habitual melancholy had settled—a melancholy that nothing could disturb. But Nora was the kindest, the most attentive of friends, and her voice had a soothing influence on Peggy's darkened soul.

The sound of mirthful voices mingled with loud bursts of laughter speedily announced the arrival of the youngsters who burst in pell-mell, thinking of nothing in the world but their recent sport. The young Dwyers were somewhat abashed on seeing Con, but their timidity was of short duration, when he began to talk to them of all the strange sights they had to see about their new home, and all the untried pleasures of wood and field. Andy looked on with a pleasant and happy smile, nodding occasionally at his wife, with an air that seemed to say: "What a place this will be for us and the children!" As his eye rested on Patsey Bergen, now a tall, muscular boy of ten or thereabouts, a grave smile suddenly lighted up his features.

"Come here," said he, "Silas, or Jeff—why, then, what sort of a memory have I at all, that I can't remember that name of yours?—what's this it is, my little man?—oh, now I think of it, you're little Henry Clay—are you not?"

Paul was going to answer, but Andy made a sign to him to keep quiet.

"No, no, cried Patsey," eagerly, "my name is Patrick—Patsey, you know!"

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"Why, then, I declare, so it is," said Andy, "how
 in the world could I make such a mistake? But,
 then, after all, Patrick is such an ugly name."

"Oh! no, Mr. Dwyer," said Patsey, quickly;
 "*Patrick* is a good name, and I like it now better
 than any other. I used to not like it, but that was
 long ago when I was a little fellow and didn't know
 any better. The Yankee boys said it wasn't a pretty
 name, but if I were there now, I'd tell them it was
 better than any of theirs. Why, Jeff and Wash and
 all such names that I used to think ever so nice, are
 only fit for dogs. But that's true, Terry, you didn't
 see my dog Pincher?"

Terry answered in the negative, whereupon the
 whole juvenile party trooped off again on a new
 scent, leaving their seniors to comment at leisure on
 what had just passed.

"Ah!" said Peggy Daly, suddenly breaking silence,
 after she had listened a while to the others, "ah! if
 poor Tom had only come out here in time, or any-
 where else only where he did go, he might have been
 a livin' man this day, and a prosperous man, too.
 Och! och! but it was the black day for him an' me
 when he settled down in that unfortunate place."

Con listened to the poor girl's incoherent ravings
 with a heart full of tender sympathy, but he still
 wondered what had brought her away from her only
 relatives to a new and distant country. This ques-
 tion he put to Mrs. Dwyer as he thought in a very
 cautious whisper, but it did not escape Peggy's quick

ear, and she replied with startling vehemence: "Is it me stay in that hateful place when Tom was gone?—sure all the good that was in me was mindin' *him*, and tryin' to keep him out of harm's way, for there was no one could do anything with him but me. An' och! och! wasn't he like a little child when I spoke to him, and God he knows I was hard on him at times—too hard, may be, but then it was all for his own good, an' he knew that well. But at any rate, he's dead—dead—and I wouldn't stay in the place for a mint of money!—what for would I?"

"But your sister, Peggy?" said Con, hesitatingly, overawed by the strange vehemence of her manner.

"And what of her?" she responded quickly; "what was she to me—or what was I to her? Anty has her husband and her children—she has no need of me—she never fell into my ways nor I into hers, sisters an' all as we are! I got more comfort Con O'Regan, from your own sister Winny, an' from Mrs. Bergen, an' Mrs. Dwyer here, than I ever got from Anty Brady, long as we were together, an' that's just the reason why I made my way out here, to live and die among you all. The Lord's blessin' be about Mr. Coulter, an' his two sisters, it's them I may thank for being where I am."

"Well! sure enough," said Paul, "I *did* wonder, Peggy, where you got the means of comin' out here—I knew very well you hadn't it of your own."

"Is it me?" cried Peggy, still in the same excited

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still in the same excited

tone; "why, I could never raise as much these
years past as would buy me a new dress."

"An' did they give you enough to bring you?"
asked Con, his head full of the Coulter family.

"If they didn't," said Peggy, "they gave a good
share of it between the three of them, an' the rest
they made up among their friends. An' what do
you think but Mr. Coulter wanted me to go to some
great eye doctor that he knew, an' have him exa-
mine my eyes, an' that he'd pay any expense there
might be, if there was an operation, but I wouldn't
hear to him. If Tom had lived I would, with all
the veins of my heart, but when he was gone I
didn't care. I'm just as well as I am, an' better,
too, for I can see no one but him, an' I have him
always before me. But, sure, sure, amn't I the fool-
ish creature to be talkin' so much about myself.
How is Winny, Con, and your wife and children—
now that I mind to ask for them—an', indeed, it's
not always that I have my wits about me."

"They're all well, Peggy, thanks be to God, well
and happy. I'm sure they'll be overjoyed to see
you all, an' especially Winny. I must hurry off
home an' let them know. I declare it's like a dream
to myself yet. I can hardly b'lieve it."

"Well! I'm sure," said Paul Bergen, "you're not
any more surprised than I was when I saw who was
waitin' for us in Dubaque. If the earth opened be-
fore my eyes I couldn't have been more astonished

Wasn't it the fine trick Father Doran played on us all?"

"Wasn't it now?" said Con, as he stood up to go, "an' I wish you'd just seen the smile he had on him when I was comin' past, an' him tellin' me to hurry on till I'd see Dominick Shannon."

"Dominick Shannon?" repeated Andy in surprise, whereupon Con told Paul to give an account of Biddy's supposition, and how it had got to the priest's ears, "for," said he, "I think every minute an hour till I get home with the news."

"And mind," said Nora, following him to the door, "mind and bring them all back with you just as soon as ever they can get ready. Felix and Judy will be over, an' please God we'll have a pleasant evening of it. Make haste now, an' don't let the grass grow under your feet."

Great as Con's hurry was he could not pass the priest's house without letting Father Doran know how grateful they all were to him for restoring a valued friend to their midst, while providing for the instruction of their children. Unfortunately the priest was not in. He had gone out on a sick call.

There was nothing for it, then, but to hasten home, and when Con reached there he was assailed with a shower of questions touching the new master, to all of which he gave evasive answers, and kept on as grave a face as possible.

"Put away that wheel, Biddy dear," said he "and

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yon, Winny, leave by your sewing. Get yourselves and the children ready as fast as you can, for Mrs. Bergen wants us all over."

The women demurred at these peremptory orders, and would have insisted on knowing why it was that Nora wanted them so badly.

"If it's the old master that's in it," observed Biddy, "I'll be glad to see him sure enough, but then there's no need for making such a fuss. He's no great hand at fussin' himself, unless he's greatly changed. Is it him, Con, or is it not?"

"I told you before that you'll be nothing the wiser for me," said Con, laughingly; "unless you go yourselves you'll just stay in the dark as you are now."

"Well!" said Winny, as she rose and put by her work, "I think we may as well give in, Biddy. Get up, *astore machree*, and let us get on our things. We have the milk strained up, and the cream in the churn ready for the morning, so there's nothing to keep us from going. I see by Con's eye that there's something in it past the common. Come now, do you dress Micky and I'll take Winny in hands."

Biddy was, at bottom, quite willing to be persuaded, for she dearly loved a little company, and her curiosity was a strong incentive on this particular occasion. The wheel, then, was cheerily laid aside, and in a very short time the little party sallied forth, Con carrying the youngest child in his arms.

Great was the surprise and greater the joy of Winny, when, on entering Paul Bergen's, she found

herself encircled by the slender arms of Peggy Daly, who, apprized of her near approach, had stationed herself just inside the door for that purpose. Mrs. Dwyer was the next to press forward to claim Winny's welcome, her eyes full of joyful tears, and her comely face all in a glow. Lastly came Andy, with hand outstretched, and a friendly greeting on his lips, ending with "how wonderful are the ways of God, Winny!" and by the time Winny had returned his warm shake hands, she was completely bewildered. Looking from one to the other, she stood the picture of blank amazement, while all the others, with the exception of Biddy and Peggy, indulged in a hearty laugh at her expense. Even Andy smiled, and condescended to perpetrate a joke by asking whether they still took him for Master Shannon, that they stood gaping at him so. As for Peggy, she clung to Winny's arm, whispering in her softest accents: "Don't you know me, Winny?—aren't you glad to see me again?—I'm sure I'd be glad if I could only see you as *you* see *me*."

"And I *am* glad, dear," said Winny, at length, fondly returning the gentle creature's caress; "I *am* glad to see you, and you're welcome a thousand times. But sure I thought at first it was all a dream. I can't get it into my head, at all, that *you're* here, Peggy, and Andy there, and Mrs. Dwyer. And the children—are *they* here, too?"

"Every soul of them," said Mrs. Dwyer, laughingly; "you'll see them all, by and by. We're the

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er arms of Peggy Daly, approach, had stationed for that purpose. Mrs. forward to claim Win- of joyful tears, and her lastly came Andy, with friendly greeting on his derful are the ways of me Winny had returned was completely bewil- to the other, she stood ent, while all the others, and Peggy, indulged in se. Even Andy smiled, strate a joke by asking for Master Shannon, that so. As for Peggy, she pering in her softest ac- ne, Winny?—aren't you n sure I'd be glad if I ee me."

aid Winny, at length, creature's caress; "I am're welcome a thousand at first it was all a dream. at all, that *you're* here, l Mrs. Dwyer. And the ?" said Mrs. Dwyer, laugh- l, by and by. We're the

tenants for that nice little school-house that Paul showed us as we came along."

"Well!" said Biddy O'Regan, "after all I'm not sorry that it isn't old Shannon we have. Father Doran knew well enough what he was about."

"But, tell me this, Andy," said Con, "how did you and Father Doran come acquainted?—I know you are not from the same place at home, nor even from the same county."

"I'll just tell you, then," said Andy; "it was when I was working on the railroad that Father Doran, long life to him! came collecting among us laborers for a church he was building about twenty miles from there. So he began to chat with myself about one thing and another, and he was pleased to say that it wasn't there I should be, if right took place. He came back again and said Mass for us one Sunday, and he promised me that day that he'd keep me in mind if he ever saw an opening for me. You see he has kept his promise, may the Lord reward him!"

Felix Bergen and Judy now coming in, the ceremony of introduction had to be gone through, Andy putting on the full measure of dignity becoming his new office. With a grave and very low bow he "thanked Mr. Felix Bergen and his good lady for their very cordial welcome, and hoped he would have the pleasure of instructing their little ones in the various branches of a polite education."

This raised a general laugh at the expense of Fe

lix and Judy, who blushed a little at first, but very soon joined in with the others and laughed good-humoredly. Andy looked from one to the other in surprise, but Paul soon explained the matter to his satisfaction, by telling him that Felix had "neither chick nor child" but himself and his better half.

Meanwhile Winny and Peggy had retired to a corner, where the story of poor Tom Derragh's death was poured into Winny's attentive ear, as minutely and distinctly as Peggy's strong emotion would permit. He had fallen, it seemed, into the lower hold of a vessel, and his head coming in contact with a bar of iron, the skull was so severely fractured that he lived but a few hours, and that in a state of utter insensibility. "Even me," said Peggy, in a choking voice, "even me he didn't know. He was carried to his boardin'-house—an', och! but that was the unlucky house to him—an' we were all sent for. The priest an' the doctor were there, too, but what could they do for him? The doctor probed the wound, they told me, an' shook his head an' said it was a bad business, an' as for the priest, why he could do nothing at all only say a prayer for Tom, for the poor fellow had no more sense in him than a log. An' that's the way he died, Winny—that's the way he died. Oh! may the Lord forgive him his sins, for sure, sure, he wasn't bad of himself, only the company he fell in with, an' the cursed way of livin' they all had." Here a burst of tears came to Peggy's relief, and Winny could not offer a word of

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consolation, she could only press the mourner's hand and smooth down the fair hair over her snowy forehead.

After a while, when Winny thought she had indulged this silent sorrow long enough, she suddenly asked Peggy how she had left their friend Letty, and whether she was still with the Misses Coulter. On hearing this, Peggy hastily dried her tears, and said with something approaching to a smile:

"Why, then, to be sure, she is! how could they get along without her, or how without them? They say she's a'most mad with religion of late, but I'm sure I found her a kind, good friend, if she was as mad again. What do you think, Winny dear, but she gave me five dollars to help to pay my way out here. She did, indeed, Winny, and a good Coburg dress, besides. The Lord's blessin' be about her! I'll pray for her every day I rise, that she may be brought to see the truth."

"Poor Letty!" said Winny, with a heavy sigh; "poor Letty!" it makes my heart sore every time I think of the state she's in, and knowing what she ought to be, too. Oh! if the Lord would only hear our prayers for her, and the dear good ladies that she lives with, and Mr. Coulter—if they were all in the safe way, I'd be content to die this very hour. My heart is full of gratitude to them, and while I live, I'll never forget them, day or night. But that's true, Peggy dear! where are you going to stay?"

"Well! myself doesn't right know," replied Peg-

gy, with some embarrassment; "if I thought I had any chance of bein' near *you* I'd be easy in my mind, for, to tell you the truth, it was to you an' Mrs. Paul Bergen I came, an' sure *her* family is large enough already."

"Well, never mind, Peggy *astore*," said Winny, softly, "I'll tell you a little secret that'll make your mind easy, as you say yourself." Whatever Winny whispered into Peggy's ear, it must have been of a pleasant nature, for it brought a warm glow and a bright smile to the face of the blind girl. The whisper did not escape the watchful eyes of friends and relatives, and its purport was evidently suspected, for many a shrug and wink was exchanged on the head of it.

Just then Winny was summoned to assist Mrs. Bergen in her culinary avocations, and while she was engaged in arranging the table for the evening meal, an important addition was made to the party in the person of Father Doran, who came to welcome his old acquaintance, and to congratulate him and his family on their safe arrival.

"And to tell you the truth," said the good priest as he took possession of the seat of honor, namely, a high-backed rush-bottomed chair, "to tell the truth I had a more selfish motive in coming, for I know you all feel happy, and I wish to have a share in your happiness. It does an old man like me a world of good to see happy faces round him."

"Ah! the Lord bless your reverence," said Felix

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Bergen: "sure it's all along your own doing. You tricked these people finely!"

"Well, yes, I rather think I did," said the priest, with one of his merriest laughs, for he evidently enjoyed the joke; "if to-day had been the first of April, my friend Con here would have felt rather small on seeing Andy—I beg pardon—I mean Andrew." The new schoolmaster bowed and smiled graciously. "I believe he had just as much expectation of seeing the man in the moon, and, indeed, thought far more of seeing that venerable personage, Master Shannon, peace to the good man, be he living or dead! But, come here, Patsey, my boy, and bring your young friend with you. Sit down here both of you beside me till we have a talk."

The talk, however, was soon interrupted by Nora asking if his reverence wouldn't sit over to the table and have a cup of tea.

"Most willingly, Mrs. Bergen," and Father Doran advanced with a smile to the seat pointed out for him by the hostess. "I see you have something for us more substantial than tea. Come along, Andrew, bring Mrs. Dwyer over to the table, till you try our Western cheer. Come, Felix, what are you about?" Thus gracefully assuming a command which he well knew was most pleasing to his host and hostess, Father Doran set every one about him at ease, and the company were soon seated in due rotation.

"Well, Con," said Mrs. Bergen as she handed him his first cup of tea, Paul having previously helped

him to a good slice of cold roast mutton, "this is not like the first meal you had in our house. We had neither roast nor boiled then, Con, except a dozen or so of soapy potatoes that we paid double and treble price for, and a few pounds of fried ham, half of it salt. Now thanks be to the Lord, we have our own fowl of every kind, our own pork and mutton, and in a little time, we'll have our own beef, too. At times when I look round me, I can hardly think but what it's dreamin' I am. Felix! won't you give Mrs. Dwyer a wing of that chicken and a bit of the breast with it! And Mrs. O'Regan and Winny here—why, bless my soul! Paul, what are you thinkin' of? Here's Peggy hasn't a thing on her plate yet."

"But will no one patronize *me*," said Father Doran, who had a fine boiled ham before him; "I can recommend this ham, I assure you."

This was enough. The ham was duly tried, and all the other good things in like manner, and the meal went on briskly and merrily, the presence of the priest, and his flow of ready wit, giving an additional charm to the whole. Every one was happy. Even Peggy Daly forgot her sorrows for the time, at least so far as to smile and maintain a cheerful countenance. Father Doran and Andy Dwyer kept up a running fire of dry and humorous comment on the various little incidents which occurred, to the great entertainment of the admiring company.

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all now!" said Con in an under tone to Winny, who sat next him.

"Ah! that would be too much pleasure," said Winny, with a sigh; "I suppose we'll hardly ever see one of them again. The poor old master! How he would enjoy this sight—he's so full of good nature, and likes so much to see people happy and contented."

"Ah! you speak of Thady Landrigan, Winny?" said the priest, with a sly glance at Mrs. Bergen; "indeed I wish he *was* here. Some of us would feel all the better, I have no doubt."

Winny hastened to explain, her face all crimsoned over, but Father Doran stopped her short with, "Don't be ashamed, Winny, don't be ashamed. Thady's a very good young man, and we should all be glad to see him—of course we should. However, there's a good time coming!"

Winny's blushes and her efforts to justify herself only added to the mirth of the company, and Felix Bergen "put the cap on it," as Paul said, by hoping that they'd all meet again before long at Thady's wedding. "We'll not say who the bride is to be," added Felix; "Winny there could tell us if she liked, but a secret's a secret, and it wouldn't be fair to ask her to break trust."

"Well! well!" said Father Doran, who saw that Winny's embarrassment became really painful; "well! well! let us talk of something else—weddings are all very well in their own place, but we

have other fish to fry just now. I suppose, Andrew, you'll be for taking possession of your new tenement and your new office without loss of time."

"Well! if it was pleasing to you, sir, I would. Time, your reverence, is the poor man's wealth, and every minute of it is worth gold."

"Very true, Andrew, very true, so, in the name of God, you may go in to-morrow. As for furniture, you must only do the best you can for a while, till you're able to get it. I hear you have your bedding with you, Mrs. Dwyer."

Mrs. Dwyer replied in the affirmative, and then each housekeeper present offered a loan of some article of furniture "until such time as they got their own." Andy and his wife were profuse in their thanks, and this great point settled, the conversation turned on other matters, and the evening wore away almost insensibly till Father Doran, looking at his watch, announced that it was nine o'clock. He then took his leave, and the rest of the company soon followed his example, Winny taking Peggy home with her, while the Dwyer family were divided between the houses of the two Bergens for that night.

Next day was a busy, bustling day in the settlement. Andy Dwyer and his family were taken in procession, as it were, to the small but pretty house prepared for their reception contiguous to the schoolhouse. Great was the joy of the worthy couple when they were shown the piece of ground

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attached to the house, and warm was their grati-
tude when they found that the neighbors had al-
ready furnished the dwelling with all the most ne-
cessary articles of furniture, some cooking utensils,
&c., nor were provisions wanting, for they found a
store of various kinds which might serve with care-
ful management for months to come.

CONCLUSION.

Now that we have seen our friend Con O'Regan
comfortably settled with his family in a thriving
township of fair Iowa, with Paul Bergen for his
next neighbor, we have only to sum up the fortunes
of our other characters in as short a space as may
be, fearing that our readers may think they have
followed them quite far enough.

We have seen Andy Dwyer and his good wife
put in possession of their new house, and on the fol-
lowing Monday morning the boys of the settlement,
to the number of fifty or thereabouts, might be seen
trooping from every direction towards the school-
house as a common centre. Nor were they, as
Shakspeare has it,

"Creeping like snail unwillingly to school,"

for the charm of novelty gave zest to their morning
journey, and, moreover, the new master was in
good repute amongst them, for his fame had already
gone abroad as a man who was "not a bit cross."

So the boys all gathered into the schoolhouse with eager, hopeful hearts, and were delighted to see a nice picture of the Blessed Virgin over the master's seat, with a smaller one of St. Patrick for a *vis-a-vis* on the opposite side of the room. Then the master was so kind, and cracked so many sly jokes in his own peculiar way, that the actual business of the school lost much of its dullness, and the hours of study passed away almost as quickly as any other. For that day, at least, the boys were well contented, and so was their worthy teacher, who relished his new occupation much better than the hard manual labor at which he had for years eked out a support for his family. And in the mornings and evenings, before and after school, Andy and his boys worked on the farm with the occasional assistance of the neighbors, who gave "the master" odd "duty days" now and then in gratitude for his assiduous attention to the mental and moral culture of their children. And many a pleasant discussion Andy had the honor of carrying on with Father Doran, to whom his society was an invaluable acquisition. Andy's house was not more than a stone's throw from the priest's, and when any little difficulty arose in the course of his official duties, he was sure to find an experienced counsellor in Father Doran, who, himself, visited the school almost every day. Amongst the most distinguished of the boys was Terry Dwyer, and next to him came, in due time, Patsey Bergen. Both these boys had good natural

talents, and between Andy and the priest they lacked not the necessary cultivation. Terry was something of a wag in his way, and when he wanted to have a little fun he would slyly remind Patsey of his former project of running away from father and mother to avoid going out West amongst Irishmen and buffaloes. Patsey's temper had improved considerably, so that in general this good natured rail-lery only made him laugh and blush, but at times it happened that Terry went a little too far, and then Patsey's patience would suddenly give way, and some angry words would escape him, for which he would afterwards apologize. But to say the truth of Patsey and his brother Jim, they grew up as good sons as Terry himself, or his brothers, Dan and Willy, and that is as much as need be said in their praise, for the young Dwyers were held up as examples all the country round. As for Janie, she had been always of a quiet, docile disposition, fond of staying at home and helping her mother, so that in her no reformation was needed.

For some weeks after the arrival of the Dwyers, Peggy Daly remained an inmate of Con O'Regan's cottage, and many an hour, tranquil at least if not happy, did the blind girl spend sitting on the green sunny bank under the maple trees at the end of the little garden. There she sat evening after evening knitting stockings, first for the household, and then for all the neighbors round, who soon learned to take a friendly interest in Peggy, as well from her

melancholy story, as from her own endearing traits of character. As often as Winny could manage it so, she would take out her work and sit with Peggy in her calm retreat, the children playing around them. Biddy had neither taste nor time, as she used to say, for sewing; she preferred leaving that to Winny while she attended to the work of the house and the dairy, the rearing of poultry, calves, lambs, etc. This was Biddy's element, and in it she was happy.

It so happened that, after a few weeks, there was another joyous bustle amongst our circle of friends and neighbors. Con O'Regan's house was the scene of great festivity, for Winny became the wife of Thady Landrigan, and the wedding was of course held there, and a great wedding it was, too, and the neighbors flocked from far and near on Con's invitation, for Con was resolved that Winny should be married off with all the festive honors of their race. The two Mrs. Bergens and good Mrs. Landrigan gave the benefit of their practical experience on the occasion, together with various *et ceteras* in the shape of home-made dainties for the greater adornment of the festive board. And Winny was the modestest and prettiest of brides, with her mild eyes bashfully cast down, and her delicate features shadowed by a thoughtful, subdued expression. As for Thady he was all gaiety and good humor. No cloud obscured his happiness, no anxious thoughts threw their gloom athwart the sunshine

of the hour. It was seldom indeed that Thady *did* think, and that day he thought less than ever. Care and he might be married any day, as he used to say himself, for there wasn't a drop's blood between them.

Nora Bergen was one of the happiest of the party that day, for she loved Winny as a dear younger sister, and she knew that Thady Landrigan was "just the boy to make her a good husband!" And Con O'Regan listened, and smiled, and said nothing. He rejoiced, it is true, in the prospect of Winny's happiness, but still he knew that she was about to leave his home for one of her own, and with her a portion of the sunshine was sure to vanish from his cottage door. Their lot had been so long bound up together, that poor Con could not behold their approaching separation without a pang. Still he had no wish to prevent the match, for he knew Thady was likely to make Winny happy, and, "of course," said he, "it's what must come some day."

When Winny went to her new home she took Peggy Daly with her, having first consulted her mother-in-law on the subject, and obtained her full and cordial consent. Mrs. Landrigan was none of your cranky, querulous old women. She had carried on into old age much of that careless, happy temperament, which had been hers through early and meridian life, and which her son inherited from her to his own great comfort and advantage.

The good old woman had from the first taken quite a fancy to Peggy, and was, therefore, well pleased at the prospect of having her a resident in the family. Thus, then, was poor Peggy provided with a permanent and a comfortable home, and in the constant society of Winny she might have been happy, could she have forgotten the wretched fate of him who had for so many years formed the sole object of her care. Many and many a little penitential work did Peggy perform, for the benefit of his soul, unknown to all the world, as *she* thought, though Winny was not without seeing and suspecting what was going on. Not a year passed over Peggy's head without her having a certain number of masses offered up for the repose of Tom's soul, and when Father Doran would object to taking her little offering, saying that he would do what she wanted, without her depriving herself of her little earnings, "Oh!" she would say, with a touching smile, "that's the only thing I have to do with my earnings, Father Doran, and it's the only comfort I have, too, so you'll not refuse to take it, your reverence." Of course, it was impossible to refuse, so the good priest had only to give in, and promise to say the Mass as soon as possible. At times Peggy would go and spend a week, or perhaps two, at Paul Bergen's, to help Nora and Jenny with their winter's or summer's knitting, and Peggy's visits were always festive occasions to Nora and the children. Once in a while, too, she had to pay Mrs.

Felix a visit, and then Biddy O'Regan would pretend to be jealous, so that Peggy had to spend some days with her before she went home again, in order to pacify her.

After Father Doran himself, Andy Dwyer was the greatest man in the settlement for years and years. His house was the emporium of news, as his school was of knowledge. Every Sunday after Mass, and again in the evening, the neighbors gathered in from far and near to hear the papers read, and Andy was a proud and happy man when dealing out the news of the day to an admiring audience, with notes and comments of his own. Then Andy had letters to write, read, and answer for all those who were "no scholars" themselves, and that was another very important part of his functions. And though there was a tacit understanding between him and his clients, that they were never to offer him payment for any such little services, yet we have good reason to know, indeed on the authority of Mrs. Dwyer herself, that Andy was paid over and over again in presents of one kind or another. Such, then, was the even tenor of Andy's way in the prairies of the far West.

And Con O'Regan was as happy and contented as man can be here below. It is true he had to work hard at times, and at certain seasons early and late, but what of that when his labor went to improve his own land and to bring in golden crops for the benefit of himself and his family. Sur-

rounded by friends and neighbors, with Winny happily settled within an hour's walk of his own dwelling, Con might well be happy, for he lived in an atmosphere of peace and purity where nothing was strange or uncongenial, but all was home-like and natural.

About a year after the receipt of Mr. Coulter's last letter, when Con remitted the final instalment of the Misses Coulter's loan, he received for answer, after the lapse of some few weeks, a few cold lines from Mrs. Coulter stating that her husband had died of apoplexy just two months before, and that she had sent the draft to Miss Coulter. Not a trace of emotion was visible either in the stiff regularity of the writing, or in the cold formality of the brief, business-like epistle, and yet the letter threw a gloom over the sunshine of Con's and Winny's life for many a day to come. *They* knew and felt the value of the heart whose warm pulses were stopped forever, and the sorrow which the widow should have felt, but did not, they felt indeed. Many a bitter tear did Winny shed for the loss of her generous benefactor, and her heart was filled with anguish as she thought of how little preparation he had ever made for that dread eternity in which he was now engulfed. Con sympathized fully and sincerely in his sister's feelings, and they both felt indignant at the calm indifference wherewith Mrs. Coulter communicated such doleful news.

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changed the whole current of his and Winny's thoughts. This last was from Miss Debby Coulter, acknowledging the receipt of the last instalment of the loan, and acquainting Con with the death of her brother. Miss Debby's letter was short, but it breathed the very soul of sorrow, and said that neither the writer nor her sister had ever recovered the shock of her brother's death. But what most interested Con was the information contained in the postscript. "It is said," wrote Miss Debby, "that Mrs. Coulter is about to take a second husband in the person of Dr. Richards, whose wife died last year. In fact, the affair is all settled, but the marriage is not to take place till the end of a year after poor Sammy's death. Well! let her marry who she pleases. It is nothing to us; we will never exchange words with her again."

"Hurrah!" cried Con, as he rushed breathless into Winny's kitchen, a few hours after receiving the letter; "hurrah!—I've good news for you, Winny!"

"Ah then, what on earth is it?" said Winny, laying down the iron which she had been using.

"You'd never guess," said Con, "so I may as well tell you: Mrs. Coulter and Dr. Richards are going to make a match of it. The doctor's wife died last year, it seems. Isn't that glorious? I wish them luck of all the happiness they'll have together!—I do from my heart out—it'll be a fine cat-and-dog life they'll have of it, Winny; won't it?"

The old madam will give him the worth of his villainy to you, I'll go bail, and if *he* don't revenge the poor dear master on her, my name's not Con O'Regan."

"Well! sure enough," said Winny, drawing a long sigh, "sure enough things come round mighty queer, but, as you say, Con, they're a fine match for each other, and I think neither was ever matched before, for they say Mrs. Richards was a very good sort of a woman in her way, and we all know what poor Mr. Coulter was. However, I wish neither of them any ill, and I hope they'll be happier together than you or I expect. Thanks be to God, we're out of their power, and have nothing to do with them or the like of them any more."

Peggy Daly soon after received a letter from her sister, informing her that Barney was worse than ever at the drink, so that her life was miserable. She had been always hoping that he would be encouraged by the good accounts from their friends in the West to begin to save in order to go out there, but latterly she had given up all hope, and had resigned herself to the prospect of a life of wretchedness. Most of Barney's earnings, she said, were spent in the grog-shop, so that at times she could hardly get enough to keep life in herself and the children. This was the last account Peggy had from her poor sister, who, it appeared, died in the course of the following year, whereupon the four children whom she left were taken from their

wretched father by the city authorities, to be brought up according to their good liking as their own, undisputed property.

Alas! how many Irish families in these great cities of the Eastern coast end just like Barney Brady's!

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